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Baby Steps

ベイビーステップ

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Volume 5
Chapter 34

Baby steps

ステップ

5

勝木光（かつきひかる）

神奈川六天王

江川 遥

STC所属。恵まれた身体能力と技術で神奈川の頂点に君臨。プレースタイルはサーブ&ボレー。文句を言いながらも、エーちゃんのガッツは認めている。実は、エーちゃんの存在がいい刺激に!?

第1シード

荒谷 實

GITC所属。スプリンターばりの脚力と強靭な上半身を持つ、恐るべき一発逆転系のベースライナー。

第2シード

岩佐博水

ファーサイドTA所属。あらゆるショットを器用にこなすオールラウンダー。

第3シード

大林 良

梅田TC所属ながら、湘南工業学院テニス部副主将。プレースタイルはサーブ&ボレー。

第4シード

渡沢鈴吉

STC所属。エーちゃんを"アニキ"と慕い、集めた情報を惜しげなく伝授。STCではタクマに続く主力選手。

第6シード

宮川卓也

宮川T.A 所属。武器は180cmの長身から繰り出されるフォアバック両手打ちのストローク。

第5シード

いよいよ準決勝スタート!

荒谷 VS. エーちゃん

まずは荒谷くんの弱点をつく!!

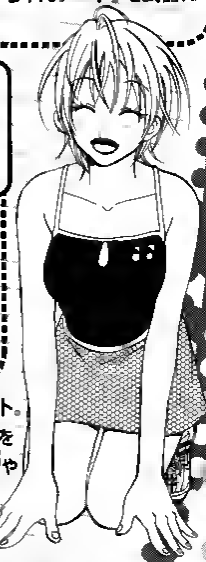
Baby Steps 人物紹介

ベイビーステップ

エーちゃん 丸尾栄一郎

STC所属。几帳面でマジメな優等生。気楽な気持ちで始めたテニスに、どっぷりハマる。地道な練習をコツコツ続け、着々とレベルアップ中!! 練習や試合内容をすべて書き込んだ「エーちゃんノート」を武器に奮戦中!!

ナツ 鷹崎奈津



STC所属。エーちゃんと同じ高校に通い、学年一かわいいと評判。性格はテキトーで大雑把だが、テニスに向ける情熱は人一倍!! マジメに頑張るエーちゃんを心から応援している。

影山

エーちゃんのクラスメイト。几帳面すぎるエーちゃんをからかいながらも、テニスの練習や試合に付き合うイイ奴。

佐々木姫子

エーちゃんのクラスメイト。テニスを始めてから、たくましくなりつつあるエーちゃんに興味津々!?

神奈川ジュニアテニスサーキット開催中!!

エーちゃん、まさかの大躍進!! 第3シードの岩佐を破り、ついに……

ベスト4進出!!

Baby Steps

CONTENTS

#34 新しい世界……005
#35 ここからの戦い……023
#36 打倒荒谷ファイル……043
#37 強引な計画性……061
#38 大きな一歩……079
#39 代償……097
#40 糸口……117
#41 進化……135
#42 ワンブレイク……153
#43 勝つための技術……171

【掲載：2008年発行　週刊少年マガジン第31号 第33号～第42号】

★この物語はフィクションであり「実在の人物 団体名 出来事などとは一切関係ありません

to Giant Strides

MARUO-KUN, WHY DO YOU PLAY TENNIS?
HUH?
HMM... THAT'S A SURPRISE.
B-BECAUSE ...I ENJOY IT
THE ONE YOU'RE FIGHTING AGAINST NEXT, ARAYA, IS GOING TO BE PRETTY INTENSE THEN...
!?
WH-WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
I'VE...NEVER WON AGAINST ARAYA. NOT EVEN ONCE.
HE HAS FUN DRAWING PICTURES ON THE COURT BUT HIS REASON FOR IT IS RADICALLY DIFFERENT FROM MINE.

#34: A WHOLE NEW WORLD

HAH!
He carries an advantage over his opponent, has a strong physique, and has a counter-attack that he uses to forcibly retake control of the game.
!
From there, he relies on speed and power to maintain a high tempo tennis, and overwhelm his opponent.
HUH!

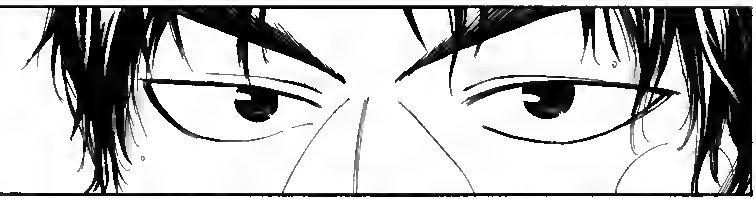
YEAH!
HE'S ALSO VERY LOUD WHEN HE PLAYS...
KAMEN
RATHER THAN VARYING HIS GAME AND USING POWER, SPEED, AND LEVELHEADEDNESS, HE USES HIS FIERCE EMOTIONS AS A WEAPON
HE EMPLOYS THE SAME BASELINE RUNNING STYLE AS MIYAGAWA-KUN, BUT THEIR TYPES ARE ENTIRELY DIFFERENT.
A P-PROFES-SIONAL?!
YEAH
AND MORE SO THAN ANYTHING ELSE, HE'S AIMING TO BECOME A PRO-FESSIONAL.

HUH, ME?
I'VE... UH .. NEVER THOUGHT ABOUT IT...
SO YOU'RE NOT GOING TO BECOME A PRO?
ポカーン
OUR GAME MAY HAVE BEEN SHORT, BUT I FEEL LIKE YOU'RE ON YOUR WAY TO BECOMING A PLAYER LIKE THAT.
I GUESS YOU'LL START THINKING ABOUT IT BEFORE TOO LONG.
...
GOOD LUCK
MORE THAN LIKELY, YOU'LL BE AGAINST ARAYA.
BUT SINCE I THINK YOU'LL BE ABLE TO DO WELL IN YOUR NEXT GAME, I'M TELLING YOU THIS RIGHT NOW.
HIRO-MI
SORRY FOR SAYING WEIRD STUFF TO YOU BEFORE YOUR GAME,

I'VE JUST BEEN PLAYING TENNIS FOR FUN. I CAN'T WIN AGAINST SOMEONE LOOKING TO BE A PROFESSIONAL.
SO WHAT DO I SPECIFICALLY NEED TO DO IT?
SHOULD I BE READY TO BET MY LIFE ON IT? OR BE FIXATED ON WINNING?
I WONDER WHAT IT IS ABOUT ARAYA-KUN THAT MAKES IWASA-KUN THINK HE CAN'T WIN?
IWASA-KUN SAID I WAS CLOSE TO BEING THAT KIND OF PLAYER, TOO.
YES...

GOOD GAME.
NICE!
ズン
ズン
GAME, SET. WON BY ARAYA.
COUNT 6-0.
はっ
しゃあ!!
BUBBLE: YEAH!

ドクッ
SO YOU BEAT IWASA?



YOU REALLY DID MAKE IT THIS FAR...
ゴクッ
YOU JUST HAVE TO REACH US, FIRST.
Y-YES ...
THIS IS COMPLETELY DIFFERENT FROM BACK THEN...

I WILL SLAUGHTER YOU.

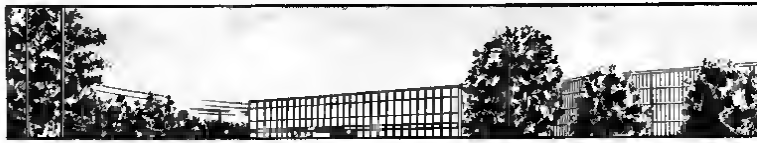
HUUUU-UUUH?!
Y-YOU KNOW THIS IS A TENNIS MATCH, RIGHT?!
S-SLAUGHT-ER ME?

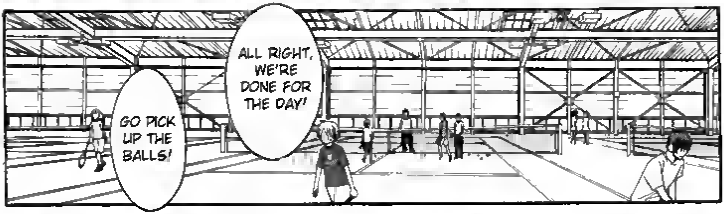
SO THIS DECIDES THE TOP 4, THEN.
OH, IT'S YOU OOBA-YASHI.
STARTING IT ALL OFF WITH THREATS ...THAT GUY NEVER CHANGES.
stay true
YEAH
COUNTING ON A GOOD MATCH WITH YOU
BUT I NEVER THOUGHT HE'D BE THIS FAST.
I KNEW HE'D COME SHOW US WHAT HE WAS MADE OF BECAUSE OF LAST YEAR.
BUT IT'S REALLY SURPRISING THAT MARUO-KUN'S IN THE TOP 4

!?
I'M THE ONE HE'S ALWAYS COMPETING AGAINST.
WHAT, YOU EXPECTED THIS TO HAPPEN?
YEAH, WELL, THAT'S HOW IT GOES.
PLEASE TEACH ME MORE.
LAST SUMMER, WE MET UP FOR PRACTICE MATCHES TO GET HIM UP TO SPEED,
HE WOULD MAKE SURE TO COME TO ME AFTER PRACTICE TO WORK ON STUFF, HAVING GOTTEN THE COACH'S APPROVAL
PLEASE HELP ME!
WELL, I ALWAYS BEAT HIM DOWN...
I WANT TO TRY HAVING ANOTHER MATCH AGAINST YOU
TO HAVE GAMES EVERY SINGLE DAY WITH EGAWA TAKUMA...
Should I pity or envy him?
I SEE.

YEAH ...
MY NEXT MATCH IS THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW SO I CAN'T REALLY PRACTICE TOMORROW.
OH, I SEE... GOOD LUCK THEN.
EHH?!
YOU'RE GOING TO GO PRACTICE AGAIN NOW?!
I-IS IT OKAY IF I COME WATCH YOU PLAY AGAIN?
HUH? I-IF YOU WANT.
YEAH, IN TWO DAYS
SEE YOU LATER
MARUO-KUN IS SO AMAZ-ING...
HE'S PRAC-TICING FOR HIS GAME AGAINST THAT ONE GUY...
YEAH I GET THE FEELING HE'S GETTING A LITTLE TOO HOOKED ON TENNIS
I'M GLAD I CAME TO WATCH, THOUGH
BUT THAT WAS REALLY SURPRISING.

HE'S SO NICE AND DEPENDABLE AT SCHOOL,
HERE ARE MY NOTES FOR YOU.
AND ALWAYS SO CALM NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENED.
IT'S THE FIRST TIME I'VE SEEN HIM SHOW THOSE KINDS OF EMOTIONS...
SHOULD I TAKE THAT MEAN YOU'VE FALLEN IN LOVE WITH HIM?
THAT'S NOT IT AT ALL!
Ouch




ALL RIGHT, WE'RE DONE FOR THE DAY!
GO PICK UP THE BALLS!

GOOD LUCK WITH YOUR MATCHES!
GOOD WORK TODAY!
HAVE A GOOD EVENING!

EI-CHAA-AAAN!
OH, NACCHAN, HOW WAS YOUR MA-...?
CONGRATS ON MAKING THE TOP 4!
EHHHHHH!
YOU WERE THE TALK OF THE DAY, TODAY!
YOU WERE PROBABLY REALLY AMAZING AND A TON OF PEOPLE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT YOU BY NOW!
HMM... YEAH, BUT... I PLAYED TO WIN, BUT ...
?

YOU KNOW, EI-CHAN...
WHETHER THE OPPONENT HAD LEG PAINS OR WHETHER YOU WERE IN YOUR BEST CONDITION, A WIN IS A WIN, YOU KNOW?
SO WHEN YOU WIN A MATCH, JUST BE HAPPY YOU WON!
IF YOU DON'T THINK LIKE THAT, THE OPPONENT WHO LOST AGAINST YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO MOVE ON EITHER
I-I GUESS SO...
I MEAN, IF YOU GET HURT IN A MATCH AND LOSE, YOU DON'T GO ON THINKING, "IF I HADN'T GOTTEN HURT, I'D HAVE WON," DO YOU?
YEAH.. I GUESS I WOULDN'T REALLY WANT TO...
IT'D HAVE TO HAPPEN FOR ME TO KNOW...
EI-CHAN...IT'S BEEN REALLY HARD FOR YOU THEN, HASN'T IT?
YOUR OPPONENTS IN THE TOP 4 ARE GOING TO BE EXTREMELY STRONG, SO THE MATCHES ARE PRETTY MUCH NOT GOING TO GO THE WAY YOU'D EXPECT THEM TO.
IF YOU FIND A WAY TO WIN OR AN OPPORTUNITY OPENS UP FOR YOU, THEN YOU HAVE TO HOLD ON TO THAT.

HUH...? IS THAT WHAT THE DIFFERENCE IS?
BETWEEN ME AND SOMEONE AIMING TO BE A PRO?
WH-WHY ARE YOU ASKING ALL OF A SUDDEN..? DIDN'T I TELL YOU THAT WAS A SECRET?
SORRY..I THOUGHT I'D TAKE A CHANCE AND ASK
SPEAKING OF WHICH, YOU WANT TO BECOME A PRO, RIGHT, NACCHAN?
ドヨ
ドヨ
?
...
WHAT MADE YOU WANT TO GO FOR IT?
WHY DO YOU WANT TO BE A PROFES-SIONAL?
HMM...
OH, OH, SHE'S TROU-BLED BY IT!
Why, why?

I-IT'S FINE IF YOU DON'T WANT TO TELL ME ...
OKAY THEN!
I'LL TELL YOU IF YOU WIN YOUR MATCH AGAINST ARAYA-KUN
HUH?!
HUH...? IF I WIN, YOU'LL TELL ME?
YEP.
BUT I'VE GOT TO WIN TO KNOW?
THAT'S RIGHT.
SO WIN YOUR MATCH.
Y-YEAH . I'LL DO MY BEST
I STILL DON'T REALLY GET IT IN THE END

I'M DIFFERENT FROM YOU.
I'M GOING TO BE A PRO...
Baby Steps
I'M GOING TO SLAUGHTER YOU.
UWAH!
がばっ!!
IT WAS JUST A DREAM ...

#35: THE BATTLE STARTS NOW

THE DAY BEFORE THE SEMIFINALS.

BEFORE SETTING OFF TO FIGHT MATCHES ON A GRANDER SCALE FOR THE VERY FIRST TIME,

I HAD PLANNED TO DO SOME LIGHT PRACTICE BUT GOT ANXIOUS AND ENDED UP STAYING WAY LONGER TO KEEP PRACTICING

110

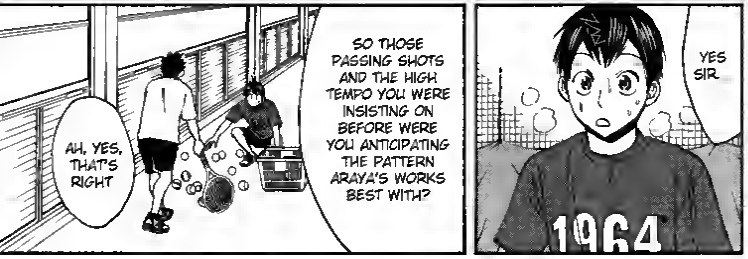
119

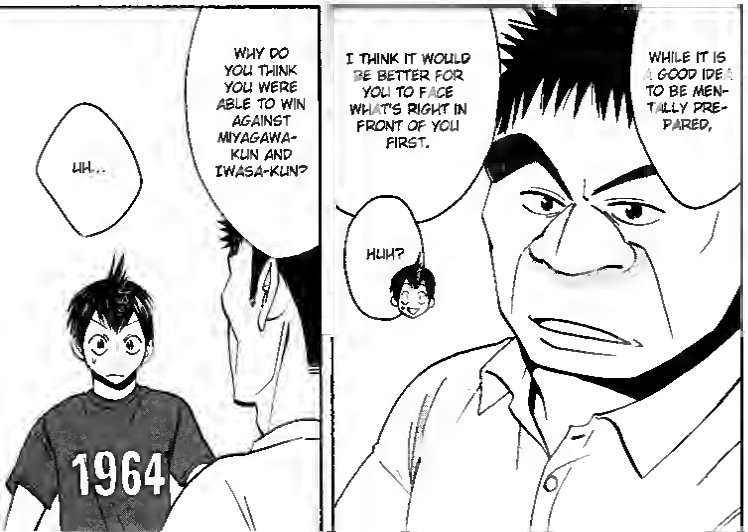
ARAYA-KUN'S DISTINCTIVE FEATURES CONSIST OF HIS SPEED OF HIS TEMPO AND HIS COUNTER SHOT.

HAH!

SO IN OTHER WORDS, I NEED SPEED AND POWER!

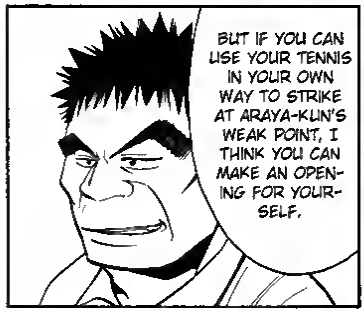
COULD YOU INCREASE THE TEMPO?
AND COULD YOU COUNTER AGAINST ME WHEN I MOVE UP THE COURT ...?
I UNDERSTAND HOW YOU FEEL, BUT DON'T YOU THINK IT'D BE BEST TO END IT HERE FOR TODAY?
YOU HAVE A THREE-SET MATCH TOMORROW, SO IF YOU LEFT FEELING TIRED, IT WOULD HAVE THE OPPOSITE EFFECT OF WHAT YOU WERE HOPING FOR.

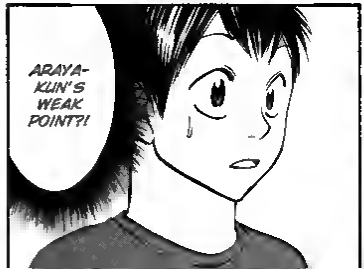

YES SIR.
SO THOSE PASSING SHOTS AND THE HIGH TEMPO YOU WERE INSISTING ON BEFORE WERE YOU ANTICIPATING THE PATTERN ARAYA'S WORKS BEST WITH?
AH, YES, THAT'S RIGHT
1964


WHILE IT IS A GOOD IDEA TO BE MENTALLY PREPARED,
I THINK IT WOULD BE BETTER FOR YOU TO FACE WHAT'S RIGHT IN FRONT OF YOU FIRST.
HUH?
WHY DO YOU THINK YOU WERE ABLE TO WIN AGAINST MIYAGAWA-KUN AND IWASA-KUN?
UH...
1964

BECAUSE I WAS REALLY LUCKY.
EXACTLY.
UGH! He didn't even deny it.
YOU'RE RIGHT – IT WAS LUCK MIYAGAWA-KUN'S WARINESS AND IWASA-KUN'S ENDURANCE WORKED AGAINST THEM
...

TO ELABORATE, BECAUSE YOUR MOVING UP THE COURT EVADED MIYAGAWA-KUN'S BEST STROKE.
AND BECAUSE YOU DEFIANTLY KEPT GOING UP AGAINST IWASA'S TECHNIQUE, YOU WERE ABLE TO WIN.
ESSENTIALLY, YOU FOUND THEIR WEAK POINTS AND STRUCK AGAINST THEM.


HONESTLY, I THINK IT'S IMPOSSIBLE FOR YOU TO GO UP AGAINST ARAYA-KUN AS YOU ARE NOW.
BUT IF YOU CAN USE YOUR TENNIS IN YOUR OWN WAY TO STRIKE AT ARAYA-KUN'S WEAK POINT, I THINK YOU CAN MAKE AN OPENING FOR YOURSELF.

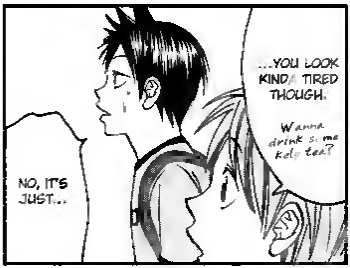

ARAYA-KUN'S WEAK POINT?!

IF YOU REALLY WANT TO WIN, DON'T YOU THINK YOU SHOULD STAY AWAY FROM HIS STRONG POINTS
AND AIM MORE AT HIS WEAK ONES?
HIS WEAK POINTS?!
1964
OH YEAH
...
...THAT'S WHAT HE TOLD ME TO DO,
BUT WHAT EXACTLY ARE ARAYA-KUN'S WEAK POINTS?
HMMM...
HE'S A PRETTY ROUGH GUY,
SO HE'S NOT EXACTLY THAT GREAT WITH THE LADIES...
THAT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH TENNIS, YOU KNOW...
ハァン

TH-THAT'S RIGHT...
IF I REMEMBER CORRECTLY, TAKUMA-SAN HAS NEVER BEEN DEFEATED BY ARAYA
AH BUT TAKUMA-SAN WENT HOME JUST A LITTLE WHILE AGO
WHY NOT TRY ASKING TAKUMA-SAN?
THAT'S A GOOD QUESTION...HE'S NUMBER 2 IN THE ENTIRE PREFECTURE SO...
I don't th nk he really has that kind of weak- ness
I MIGHT FIND OUT SOMETHING IF I ANALYZE HIS CHARACTERISTICS...
ARAYA-KUN'S WEAKNESSES...
NO PROBLEM, I'M GLAD I COULD HELP!
THEN I'LL TRY ASKING HIM TOMORROW! THANKS!
.....
SEEMS LIKE MY TRAIN OF THOUGHT HAS SOMEHOW CHANGED A BIT FROM BEFORE

DAY OF THE MATCH, TOURNAMENT AREA.
EGAWA TAKUMA'S UP THERE THIS YEAR, TOO?
ARAYA'S OPPONENT IS A NON-SEEDER, RIGHT?
IT'S THAT NOTEBOOK KID MARUO WONDER IF HE'LL DO THAT AGAIN THIS MATCH?
BOTH MATCHES START AT 10 O'CLOCK.
HMM...

TH-THANKS...
YOU BEAT IWASA-KUN? AWESOME, CONGRATS ON MAKING THE TOP 4.
YOU'RE UP AGAINST ARAYA NEXT, RIGHT?


...YOU LOOK KINDA TIRED THOUGH.
Wanna drink some kelp tea?
NO, IT'S JUST...

AH, MIYAGAWA-KUN...?!
MARUO-KUN! I CAME TO CHEER YOU ON!

AND I WAS BEING SERIOUS, TOO...
IF YOU DO NOTHING BUT LOOK FOR PEOPLE'S WEAKNESSES YOUR TENSION'S GOING TO GO DOWN LIKE BAM, OUT OF NOWHERE.
SORRY, SORRY, BUT THAT SOUNDS JUST LIKE YOU!
はは

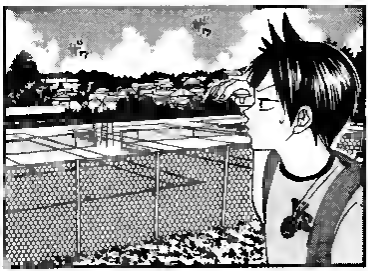
I SUPPOSE I REALLY WOULD RATHER CHALLENGE THAT SPEED AND POWER OVER LOOKING FOR HIS WEAK POINTS.
I KNOW I'M WORSE OFF HERE AND THAT I'M PROBABLY THINKING TOO LIGHTLY OF IT, BUT I DON'T WANT TO HAVE ANY REGRETS ABOUT BEING IN THE TOP A FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER.
YOU REALLY GIVE OFF THE FEELING OF BEING AN HONOR STUDENT, HUH?
UGH...
BUT HEY, THE FACT THAT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR YOUR OPPONENT'S WEAKNESS IS PROOF THAT BOTH YOU AND YOUR OPPONENT ARE STRONGER
HUH?
I ONLY THOUGHT ABOUT YOUR WEAK POINTS AND FOUGHT AGAINST YOU, AND HOW'D THAT GO?
NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT...
THANKS TO THAT, YOU TURNED THE ATTACK AROUND ON ME AND BEAT ME, RIGHT?
OF COURSE, I GREW UP A BIT BECAUSE OF THAT MATCH, TOO
SO EVEN NOW, I STILL THINK I FOUGHT AGAINST YOU FAIR AND SQUARE.
IT'S WEIRD FOR YOUR TENSION TO SINK DOWN FROM THAT.

FOR BOTH YOUR OPPONENT, AND FOR YOURSELF,
YOU HAVE TO FIND THEIR WEAK POINTS FAIRLY AND THOROUGHLY, AND STRIKE THEM DOWN.
O-OH, I SEE ...
...
ACTUALLY, I'M THANKING YOU FOR DOING THAT.
I'VE NEVER THOUGHT OF IT LIKE THAT BEFORE
MIYAGAWA-KUN IS AN AMAZING GUY...
SO, YOU'RE GOING TO BE A PRO, TOO?
A PRO?
HMM, I WONDER...
HE EVADED MY QUESTION...
IT'S DECIDED THEN — I'LL TRY ASKING TAKUMA-SAN ABOUT ARAYA-KUN'S WEAKNESSES!

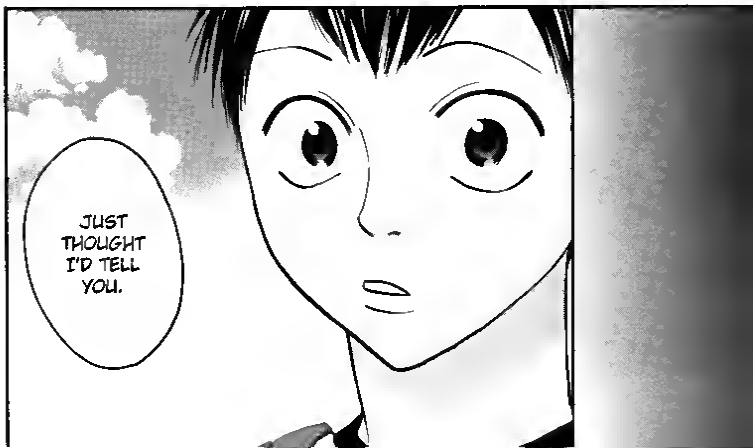
OH YEAH, AND SINCE YOU BEAT ME, YOU'D BETTER WIN THE CHAMPIONSHIP!
OH, UH, I'LL DO WHAT I CAN...
See you later.
SURE, GOOD LUCK!
THANKS, MIYAGAWA-KUN!

I'M TELLING YOU, IF I DON'T BEAT YOU AT THIS TOURNAMENT,

I WONDER WHERE TAKUMA-SAN'S AT
BEING THIS LATE, HE SHOULD BE HERE...



I'M GOING TO GIVE UP ON BEING A PRO.
きれい使いましょう


JUST THOUGHT I'D TELL YOU.

IF ARAYA-KUN LOSES,
HE'S GOING TO GIVE UP ON BECOMING A PROFESSIONAL?
HUH ...?
I'LL BE WAITING FOR YOU IN THE FINAL ROUND
チュッ
使キ
WELL, THAT'S THE WAY IT IS RIGHT NOW
...
OH, SOOORRY. I THOUGHT IT'D BE BETTER TO TELL YOU THAN NOT SAY ANY-THING.
SO WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO WITH YOU TELLING ME THAT OUT OF NO-WHERE?
And in the bathroom too

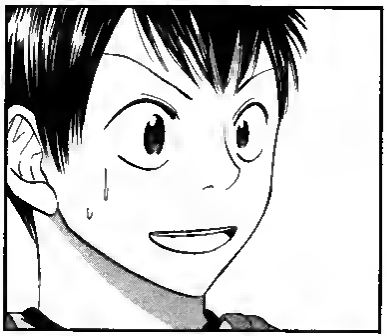
SEEYA LATER THEN
...
YOU WERE IN THE SAME CLASS AS ME, TOO
WHY...? WHY DO YOU HAVE TO WIN THAT BADLY?
AND HE COMPLETELY IGNORED THAT HE'S GOING TO FIGHT ME FIRST...
WELL, NOTHING I CAN REALLY DO ABOUT THAT, BUT ...
BUT TO PROFESS SOMETHING LIKE THAT IN FRONT OF YOUR RIVAL... WHAT AMAZING DETERMINATION.
AND HE'S ALREADY PREPARED FOR THE MATCH AGAINST ME...
NO, HE'S MORE THAN READY FOR IT...

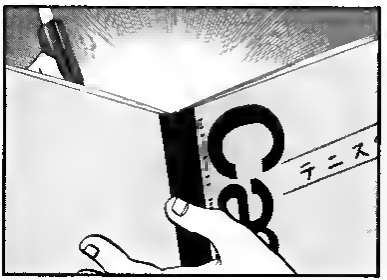
AND IF YOU WIN IN THE END IT'S BECAUSE YOU ARE STRONG AND YOU SHOULD HAVE FAITH IN YOURSELF AND BE HAPPY YOU WON
YOUR OPPONENTS IN THE TOP 4 ARE GOING TO BE EXTREMELY STRONG SO THE MATCHES ARE PRETTY MUCH NOT GOING TO GO HOW YOU WOULD EXPECT THEM TO
IF YOU FIND A WAY TO WIN, OR AN OPPORTUNITY OPENS UP FOR YOU, THEN YOU HAVE TO HOLD ON TO THAT.
HE'S AIMING TO BE A PRO.
YOU HAVE TO FIND THEIR WEAK POINTS FAIRLY AND THOROUGHLY.
!
UM... TAKUMA-SAN.

COULD YOU TELL ME ARAYA-KUN'S WEAK POINTS?
HUH?
I NEVER EXPECTED THE KID I'M LOOKING AT TO COME ASK ME THAT.
.....
I'D LIKE THEM AS A REFER-ENCE.
EH...
IS WHAT I'D HAVE LIKED TO SAY,
BUT I GUESS IT'S OKAY TO TELL YOU.
I GUESS I SHOULD
I know it.
FIGURE IT OUT BY YOURSELF.

THESE ARE THE KANAGAWA JR. TENNIS CIRCUIT SEMIFINALS.
NO.89 MARUO-KUN AND NO.128 ARAYA-KUN, PLEASE MAKE YOUR WAY TO COURT 2.

IF YOU FINISH HIM OFF, THAT'LL MAKE THINGS A HELL OF A LOT EASIER FOR ME.

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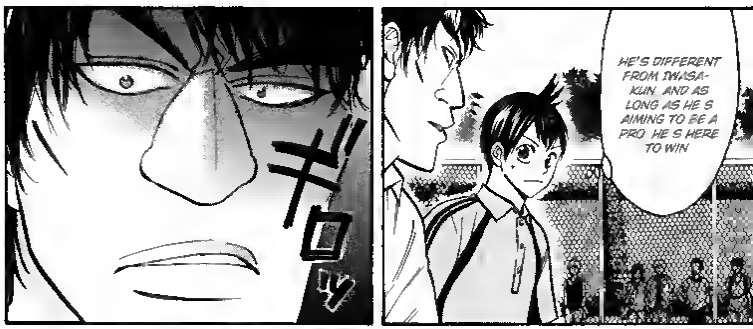
I'LL SEE HOW FAR THAT TAKES ME.
FIRST, I'LL HAVE TO STRIKE DOWN ARAYA-KUN'S WEAKNESSES.
I WAS ABLE TO BOTH GATHER INFORMATION... AND COME UP WITH A STRATEGY.
10: 00 AM. THE SEMIFINALS BEGIN NOW!

Chapter

Baby Steps

WE MADE IT IN TIME TODAY!
THE KANAGAWA JR. TENNIS CIRCUIT SEMIFINALS FOR THE 18 AND UNDER MEN'S DIVISION WILL NOW BEGIN.
NO.89 MARUO-KUN AND NO.128 ARAYA-KUN, PLEASE MAKE YOUR WAY TO COURT 2.
OH?
AH.
AND AS FOR EI-CHAN
YOU'VE ALSO BEEN COMING OUT HERE A LOT TO CHEER HIM ON, KAGEYAMA-SAN!
EH?! OH, UH... YES...
IT'S SASAKI-SAN! YOU CAME TO CHEER ON EI-CHAN!
GOOD LUCK, SASAKI-SAN...

I'M GOING TO GIVE UP ON BEING A PRO
ARAYA-KUN'S STAKING THE REST OF HIS LIFE ON THIS TOURNAMENT
#36: A FILE TO THROW OOWN ARAYA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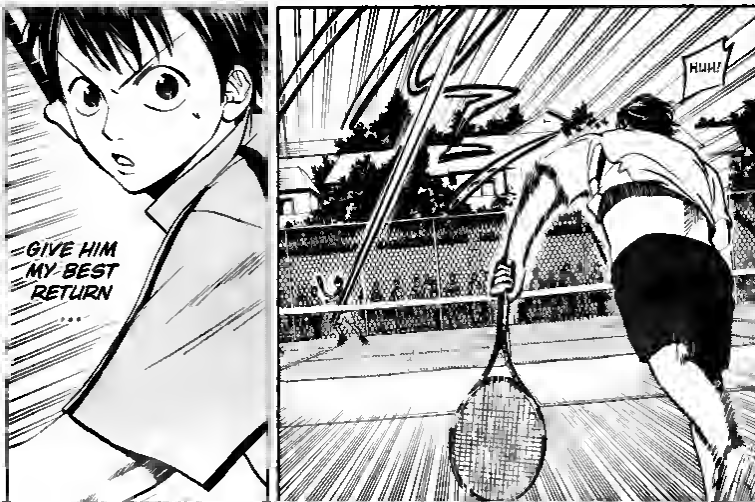
HE'S DIFFERENT FROM IWASA-KUN, AND AS LONG AS HE'S AIMING TO BE A PRO, HE'S HERE TO WIN

IT'S PROBABLY JUST ANOTHER ONE OF HIS STRATEGIES TO WIN...
Maybe?
THIS ISN'T THE PLACE TO GET FREAKED OUT!
ヒソ…

THEN AS LONG AS I'M IN THESE SEMIFINALS, I'M GOING TO AIM TO WIN IT, TOO!
GOOD LUCK!
V...W
THE MATCH IS A BEST-OF-THREE SETS. ARAYA SERVES. BEGIN!

IT TAKES A LOT OF TIME FOR HIM TO GET SERIOUS.
HE'S NOT THE TYPE TO SHOW HIS EMOTIONS WHEN HE PLAYS.
HERE WE GO ...
SINCE I ASKED TAKUMA-SAN FOR ARIYA-KUN'S WEAK POINTS, I THOUGHT OF A STRATEGY THAT WORKS FOR ME.

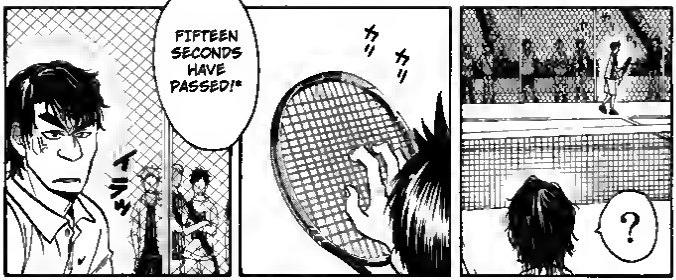
NUMBER 1 FROM THE "TAKE ARAYA DOWN" FILE!



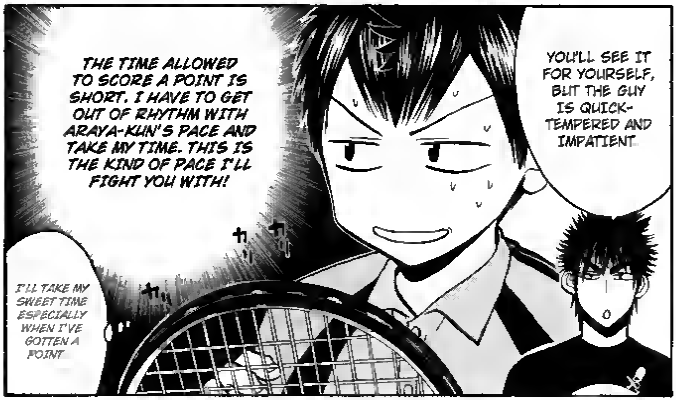
AND START STRIKING HIM DOWN!
HAH!
HE MOVES FAST!
HAH!

WELL WHATEVER! I GOT A POINT OFF OF HIM
IS THAT REALLY THE BEGINNING OF HIS WEAKNESSES?
WHEN THE BALL ENTERED HIS COURT, HE WAS COMPLETELY OVERTAKEN.
Even though I had a good return.

NUMBER 2 FROM THE "TAKE ARAYA DOWN"



*FIFTEEN SECONDS: A RULE STATING YOU HAVE 20 SECONDS TO SERVE.


THE TIME ALLOWED TO SCORE A POINT IS SHORT. I HAVE TO GET OUT OF RHYTHM WITH ARAYA-KUN'S PACE AND TAKE MY TIME. THIS IS THE KIND OF PACE I'LL FIGHT YOU WITH!
YOU'LL SEE IT FOR YOURSELF, BUT THE GUY IS QUICK-TEMPERED AND IMPATIENT.
I'LL TAKE MY SWEET TIME ESPECIALLY WHEN I'VE GOTTEN A POINT.
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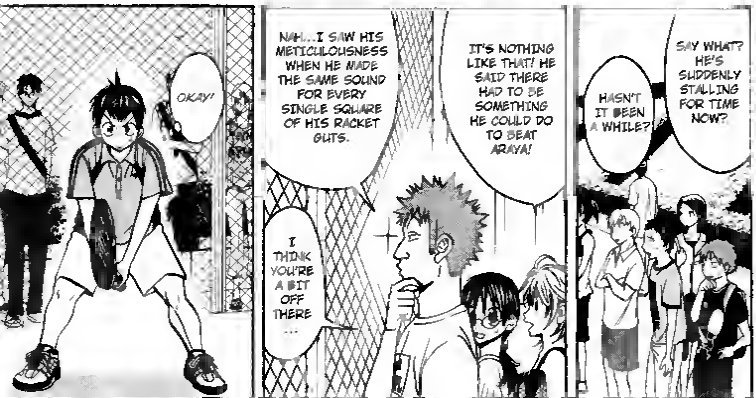
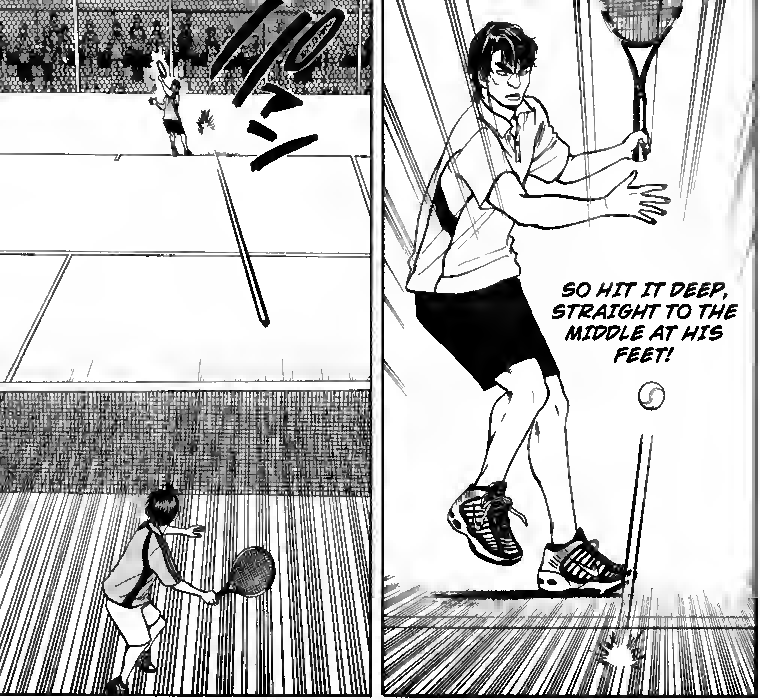

OKAY!
NAH...I SAW HIS METICULOUSNESS WHEN HE MADE THE SAME SOUND FOR EVERY SINGLE SQUARE OF HIS RACKET GUTS.
IT'S NOTHING LIKE THAT! HE SAID THERE HAD TO BE SOMETHING HE COULD DO TO BEAT ARAYA!
I THINK YOU'RE A BIT OFF THERE ...
SAY WHAT? HE'S SUDDENLY STALLING FOR TIME NOW?
HASN'T IT BEEN A WHILE?

NEXT IS TO RETURN THE BALL WITH A SLICE THAT STAYS IN THE AIR FOR A GOOD WHILE!
HE AVOIDED HITTING THE NET AND SENT IT STRAIGHT OVER!!
Taking my time worked well!
THE SCARY PART IS THAT HE'LL AIM TO MAKE A COUNTER SHOT FROM THE SIDE!
KEEP FROM GETTING CAUGHT UP IN ARAYA'S FAST TEMPO,
HE'D RATHER ATTACK FROM THE SIDE TO FORCE HIS OPPONENT INTO NOT HITTING IT BACK!
HAH!



NUMBER 3 FROM THE "TAKE ARAYA DOWN" FILE!

WAIT HIM OUT!
HIT IT DEEP AND STRAIGHT TO THE MIDDLE AT HIS FEET!
HAH!
THIS IS THE PART WHERE I'M SUPPOSED TO TAKE ACTION!
HIT IT DEEP AND STRAIGHT TO THE MIDDLE AT HIS FEET!
HUH!

MAN, YOU'RE PERSIS-TENT!
!!
IT ROSE UP A BIT!
DON'T LET HIM COUNTER AND SCORE IN ONE BLOW!

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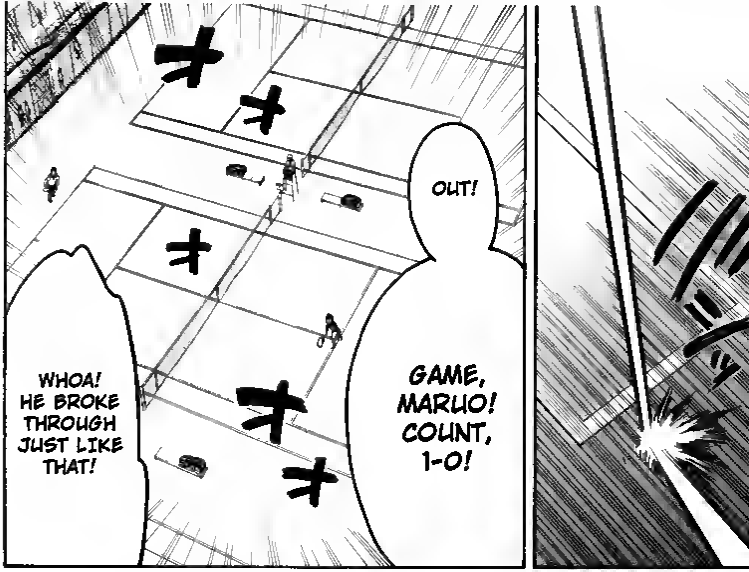
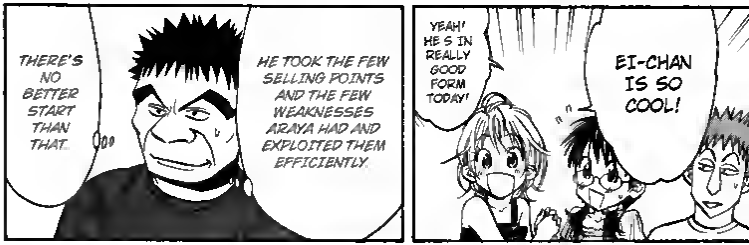
ALL RIGHT!
WOW, SWEET, EI-CHAN!
NICE! THAT WAS PERFECT!
WHOA, MARUO'S DOING GOOD TODAY, TOO!
IS ARAYA GOING TO GET CREAMED, TOO?
NO WAY THAT'S GONNA HAPPEN.
LOVE - 30.

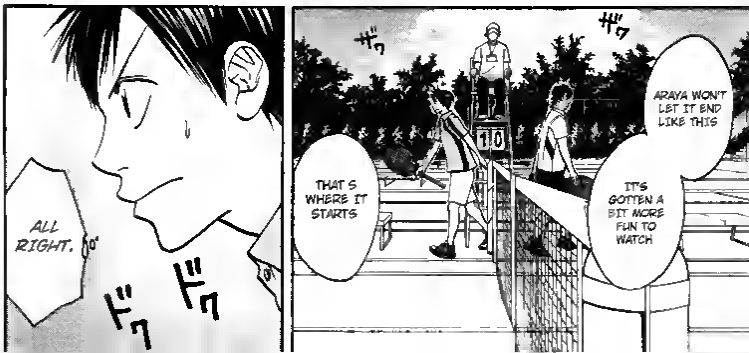
KUH!
15-30.
AWE-SOME ACE!
EVEN THOUGH HE TOOK ALL THAT TIME TO GET A POINT, IT WAS SENT BACK TO SCORE A POINT IN ONE SHOT! MAN, THAT'S ROUGH.

NUMBER 4 FROM THE "TAKE ARAYA DOWN" FILE!
SOME-TIMES, YOU JUST HAVE TO GIVE UP.
WHEN I'M BEATEN DOWN BY A PLAYER WITH POWER AND SPEED, THEN I'M BEATEN DOWN.
AT THAT POINT, I WON'T THINK ABOUT IT, AND JUST RETAIN MY MENTAL STATE.
I'LL CHANGE AROUND WITH THE NEXT RETURN AND CONCENTRATE ON IT!
HAH!
HAH!

BUT HEY, THIS FACT THAT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR YOUR OPPONENT'S WEAKNESS IS PROOF THAT BOTH YOU AND YOUR OPPONENT ARE STRONG!
30-40.
15-40.
IF I WIN, ARAYA WILL STOP FROM GOING PRO ...
BUT...
I'VE DONE WELL STRIKING DOWN AT HIS WEAKNESSES!
HAH!
I'M OKAY WITH THIS!


OUT!
GAME, MARUO! COUNT, 1-0!
WHOA! HE BROKE THROUGH JUST LIKE THAT!


THERE'S NO BETTER START THAN THAT.
HE TOOK THE FEW SELLING POINTS AND THE FEW WEAKNESSES ARAYA HAD AND EXPLOITED THEM EFFICIENTLY.
YEAH! HE'S IN REALLY GOOD FORM TODAY!
EI-CHAN IS SO COOL!


ALL RIGHT.
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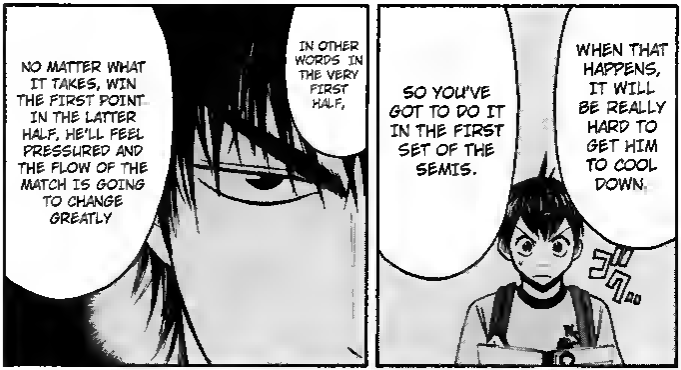
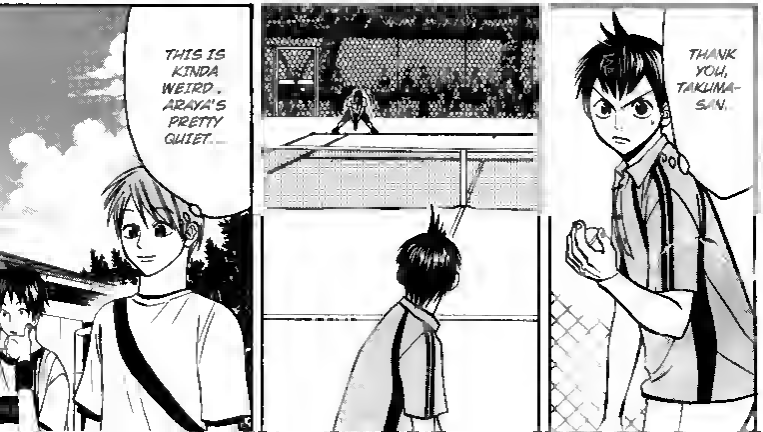
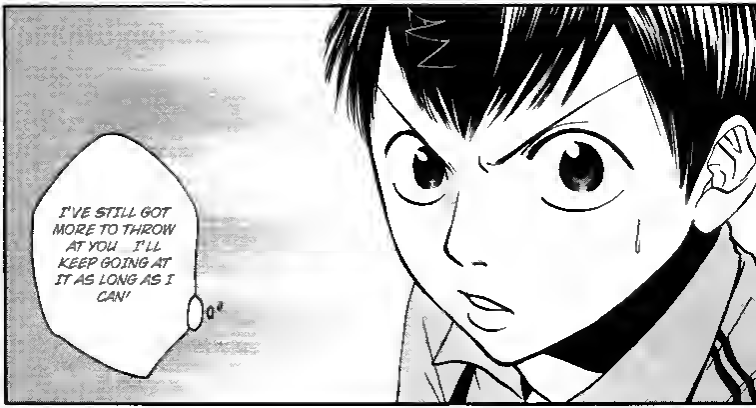
THAT'S WHERE IT STARTS
ARAYA WON'T LET IT END LIKE THIS
IT'S GOTTEN A BIT MORE FUN TO WATCH
10

WHEN ARAYA PLAYS, HIS TENSION RISES AND HE'S SLOW TO GET READY.
SOME PART OF HIM WILL DEFINITELY START GETTING BETTER.


WHEN THAT HAPPENS, IT WILL BE REALLY HARD TO GET HIM TO COOL DOWN.
SO YOU'VE GOT TO DO IT IN THE FIRST SET OF THE SEMIS.
IN OTHER WORDS IN THE VERY FIRST HALF,
NO MATTER WHAT IT TAKES, WIN THE FIRST POINT IN THE LATTER HALF, HE'LL FEEL PRESSURED AND THE FLOW OF THE MATCH IS GOING TO CHANGE GREATLY


THANK YOU, TAKUMA-SAN.
THIS IS KINDA WEIRD. ARAYA'S PRETTY QUIET...



NUMBER 5 FROM THE "TAKE ARAYA DOWN" FILE!!

NUMBER 5 FROM THE "TAKE ARAYA DOWN" FILE!
#37: AGGRESSIVE METICULOUSNESS
I'LL KEEP THIS UP...
GAME, 1-0. MARUO LEADS.
WIDEN THE GAP IN THE FIRST HALF BY ANY MEANS POSSIBLE,
BEFORE ARAYA WINDS UP ALL THE WAY...
..NO, I CAN'T LET HIM DO THAT!
IF YOU REALLY WANT TO WIN,
DON'T YOU THINK YOU SHOULD AIM FOR HIS WEAK POINTS?

AN UNDER-HANDED SERVE?!

EVADE HIS FAST TEMPO BY DOING SOMETHING UNEXPECTED!
WILL THIS GET PAST HIM?!
ALL RIGHT... I BROKE DOWN THE FLOW A BIT!

ALL RIGHT!
15 - LOVE.

HUH!

WHAA-AAT?!
HE CAN DO THAT?!
HE'S GOTTEN BETTER

カリ
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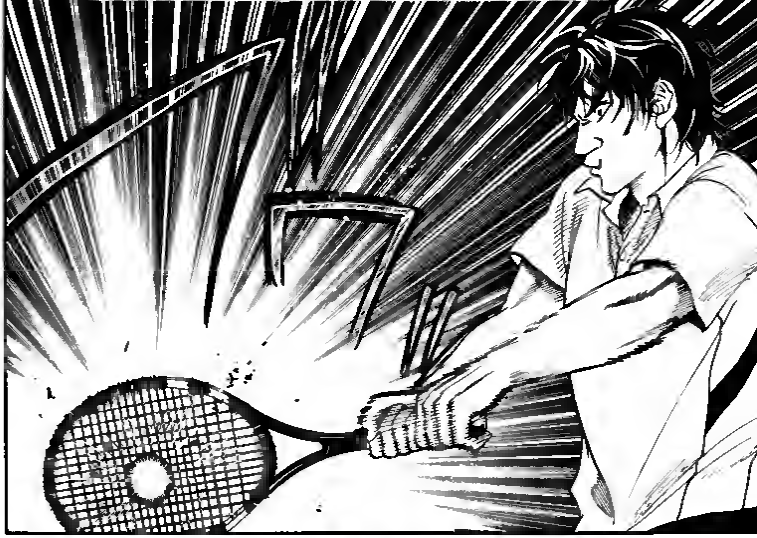
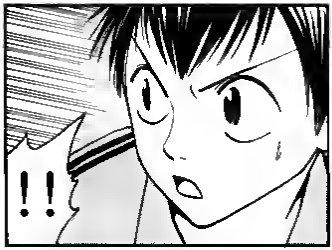
カリ

I'M WILL MAKE YOU SUFFER

SEEMS THAT WAY... HE'S DOING A LOT OF THINGS BUT EVERYTHING'S FOUGHT IN A WAY TO KEEP ARAYA FROM HIS STRONG POINT. A FAST TEMPO
YEAH! FEELS LIKE EI-CHAN'S STRATEGY IS WORKING!

HAH!
ALL RIGHT, SO THIS TIME..
HAH!
ISN'T ARAYA NORMALLY OKAY WITH HIGHER TEMPOS?!
YEAH... THAT'S HIS STRONGEST PATTERN!
HE WENT THE TRADITIONAL WAY AND SENT THE BALL INTO THE OPEN

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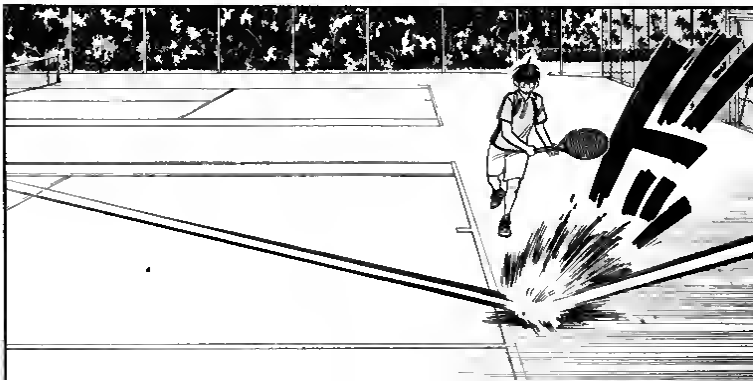
HAH!



OUT!
30 - LOVE.
ALL RIGHT!
ポッ
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ボワ
...
HIS GAME WAS SCREWED OVER FROM EVERY-THING I DID!
THIS PROVES THAT MY FILES FOR TAKING HIM DOWN ARE EFFECTIVE!
This is what I've been waiting for!
IN THE CURRENT SITUATION, EI-CHAN COULD GO ALL THE WAY WITH THIS ...
THIS SHOWS THAT ARAYA'S LOST TOUCH WITH THE PACE HE HAD AT THE START OF THE MATCH
ボワ
THERE'S A CHANCE THE GAME WOULD'VE GONE IN ARAYA'S FAVOR HAD HE GOTTEN THAT POINT.
THAT WAS A REALLY CLOSE ONE.
THAT'S TRUE ..BUT A BIG PART OF HIS SUCCESS IS FROM HIM TAKING THAT RISK, RIGHT?

SFX: GASHAN (CRASH)
CAPTAIN
!?
UWAH ?!
!?

THAT SHOT WAS IN!
YOU'RE FUCKING SCREWING WITH ME.

!?
HUH?! WHAT?!
WHAT HAP-PENED?
ARAYA'S COMPLAIN-ING TO THE REF
WHOA, DON'T GO OVER-BOARD, NOW
SAY WHAT?!
WHY'D YOU SAY IT WAS OUT?!
WHAT'S GOING ON?
WHAT
WHAAA?! JUST BARELY, MAYBE, BUT THAT WAS TO-TALLY OUT!
AGAIN.. ? HE GETS PISSED OFF SO FAST
NO JOKE

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IT WAS IN, RIGHT?
10
HUH?!
THE SHOT I JUST MADE WAS IT IN?

NO WAY, IT WAS DEFINITELY OUT!
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NO, IT WAS OUT.
IT WAS IN, RIGHT?!
ARAYA-KUN WILL BE CAUTIONED REGARDING THIS EVENT.
1
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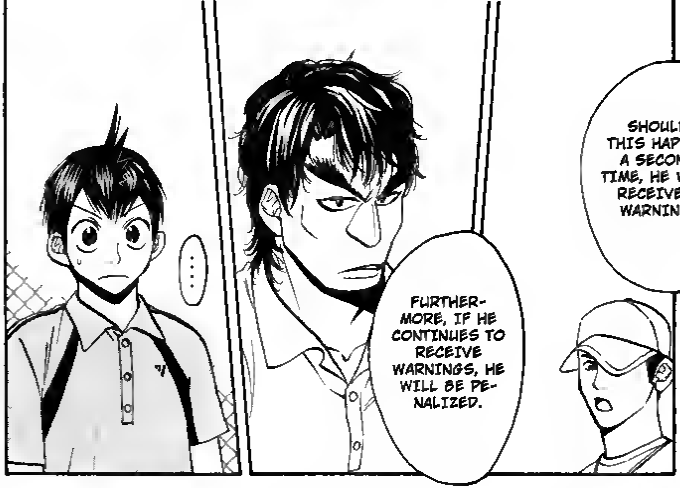
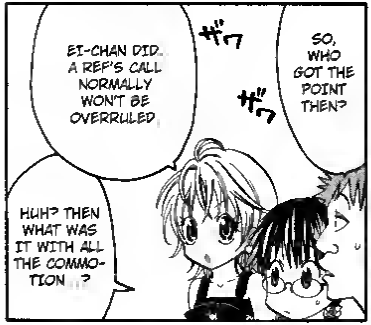
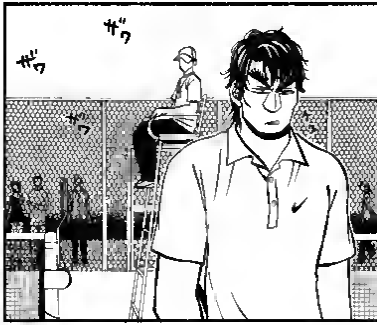
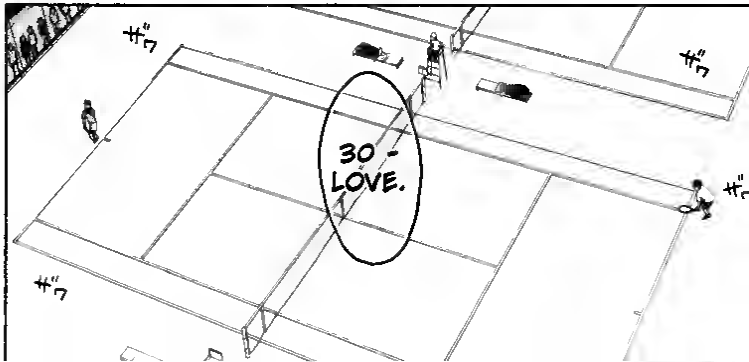

SHOULD THIS HAPPEN A SECOND TIME, HE WILL RECEIVE A WARNING.
FURTHER-MORE, IF HE CONTINUES TO RECEIVE WARNINGS, HE WILL BE PE-NALIZED.
...


SO, WHO GOT THE POINT THEN?
EI-CHAN DID. A REF'S CALL NORMALLY WON'T BE OVERRULED.
HUH? THEN WHAT WAS IT WITH ALL THE COMMO-TION...?




30 - LOVE.

REMEMBER THAT GOOD FEELING YOU HAD BEFORE...
WELL, WHATEVER... HAVE TO CONCENTRATE!
HE BACKED DOWN PRETTY EASILY.
He was really ticked off though.
HAH!

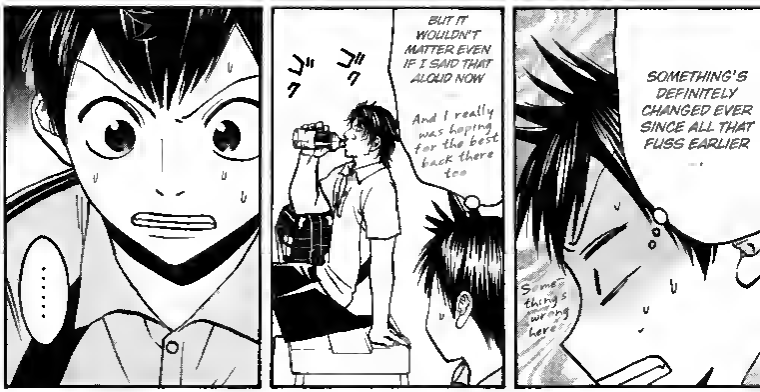
UMPH
YEAH!
30-16
!!
UGH... IN ONE SHOT?!
SO IT EXISTS.
A REAL DIFFICULT TYPE LIKE HIM.

I'M NOT SURE IF HE PLANNED THAT OR THAT'S JUST HOW HE IS
BUT THE FLOW MARUO-KUN HAD WORKED SO HARD TO BUILD UP AGAINST ARAYA-KUN WAS CUT DOWN WITHIN AN INSTANT BY ALL THE FUSS
WHEN EVERYTHING'S SAID AND DONE, THE ONE WHO BENEFITED MOST FROM THE DISRUPTION WAS ARAYA-KUN
BETTER YET, AFTER THE PROBLEM'S DEALT WITH, THE ONLY ONE EXPERIENCED ENOUGH TO CONCENTRATE DESPITE ALL THE COMMOTION AND WITH HIS OPPONENT AROUND HIM IS ARAYA-KUN
IT'S LIKE I'M PRAISING HIM
OH WELL, MATCHES HAVE STUFF LIKE THIS IN THEM TOO
MAN, THAT GUY'S DOING WELL, TOO.
He's way too pushy
URA!
HA!

HE HITS BACK ALL MY RISING SHOTS, SO THE PACE IS REALLY FAST!
EVEN IF I SOMEHOW BREAK DOWN THIS PACE AND WAIT IT OUT, HE'D SLAM A SHOT RIGHT BACK AT ME...!
GUH!
GAME, ARAYA. 1-1.

GAME, ARAYA. ARAYA LEADS 2-1.
YEAH! BRING IT!!
HE GETS INTO THE GROOVE SO FAST!
HE'S LOUD, BUT REALLY STRONG!
IT'S ALREADY GOTTEN THIS FAR ...

HE'S ALREADY GOTTEN THE HANG OF THINGS.
STARTING OFF THE MATCH WITH THE FILES TO TAKE DOWN ARAYA DIDN'T SHOW MUCH SUCCESS.
EVEN THOUGH IT'S STILL THE FOURTH GAME, HE'S GETTING BETTER AND BETTER...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BUT IT WOULDN'T MATTER EVEN IF I SAID THAT ALOUD NOW
And I really was hoping for the best back there too
SOMETHING'S DEFINITELY CHANGED EVER SINCE ALL THAT FUSS EARLIER...
Something's wrong here

IN THAT CASE... I'VE GOT NO OTHER CHOICE.
Campus notes
テニ

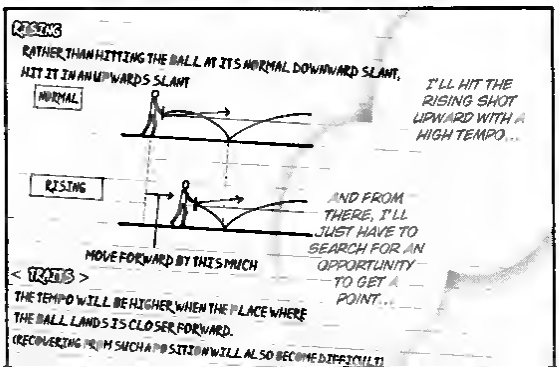
GAME, ARAYA. ARAYA LEADS 2-1.
YEAH, BRING IT!
HE'S GETTING MORE AND MORE PUMPED UP!
#38: ONE GIANT STEP

BUT THAT WAS SUCH A FAST RESPONSE. . ARAYA'S MORE PUMPED UP TODAY THAN USUAL, ISN'T HE?
THE MATCH IS STILL IN ITS INITIAL STAGES .
AMAZING .
GAH... AND HE'D STARTED OFF SO WELL, TOO...
YEAH... BUT THAT'S HOW ARAYA ALWAYS IS.
THE SCORE TURNED AROUND JUST LIKE THAT!

THE FLOW CHANGED SO RAPIDLY AFTER ALL THAT HAPPENED EARLIER!
Something's funny about this
カキ
カキ

BUT WITH THE GOOD SHAPE HE'S IN, I HAVE NO OTHER CHOICE BUT TO CHALLENGE HIM WITH IT...
I'LL BE DOING THIS SOONER THAN PLANNED,

打倒東谷ファイル その11
STARTING OFF THE MATCH BY STRIKING AT HIS WEAK POINTS WITH THE FILES TO TAKE DOWN ARAYA DIDN'T WORK...
打倒東谷ファイル その11


RISING
RATHER THAN HITTING THE BALL AT ITS NORMAL DOWNWARD SLANT, HIT IT IN AN UPWARDS SLANT
NORMAL
RISING
MOVE FORWARD BY THIS MUCH
I'LL HIT THE RISING SHOT UPWARD WITH A HIGH TEMPO...
AND FROM THERE, I'LL JUST HAVE TO SEARCH FOR AN OPPORTUNITY TO GET A POINT...
< TRAITS >
THE TEMPO WILL BE HIGHER WHEN THE PLACE WHERE THE BALL LANDS IS CLOSER FORWARD.
(RECOVERING FROM SUCH A POSITION WILL ALSO BECOME DIFFICULT)

READY YOURSELF.. LET'S DO THIS!
TIME
THIS WAS BOUND TO HAPPEN SOONER OR LATER..
PAY CLOSE ATTENTION
AND MOVE FAST!
HAH!
HAH!

HAH!
!!
UGH!
WHAT AN AMAZING ANGLE!
LOVE-IS.
GOT IT!
HAH!
THIS ISN'T CUTTING IT...GOT TO BE FASTER!

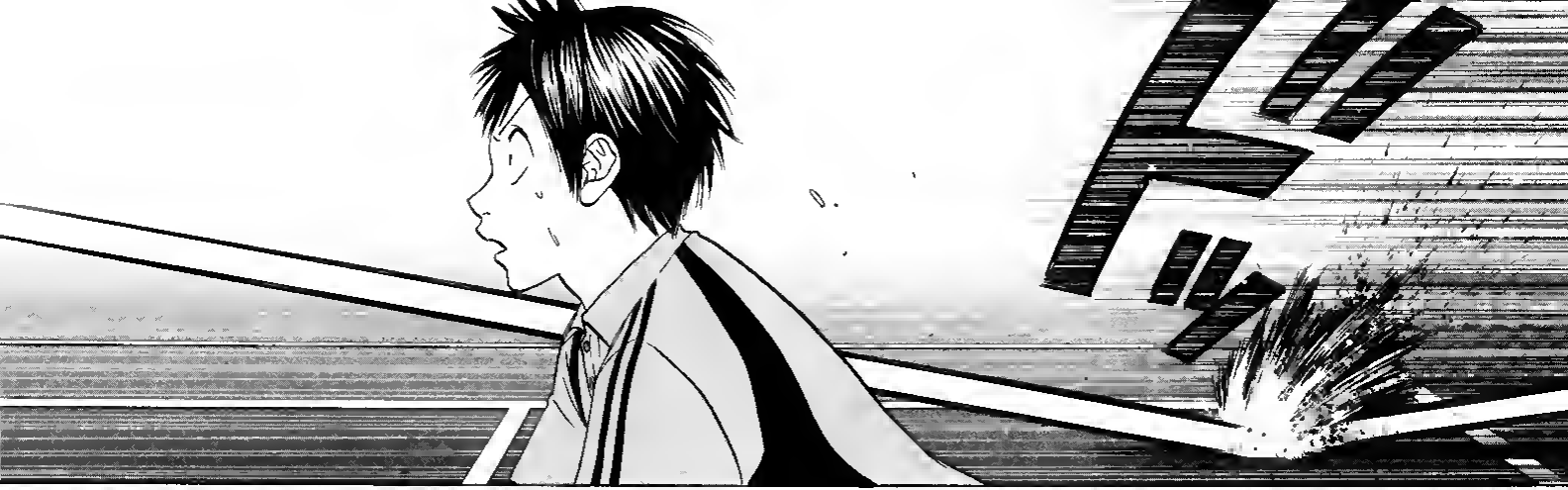
KUH!
PEW
LOVE-30.
GUH
LET'S SEE THAT ONE MORE TIME.
……
HM?

GUH!
HAH!
BUT, YOU'RE NOT JUST GOING TO BE BEATEN DOWN AT A TIME LIKE THIS ARE YOU?
IT'S ALL ONE-SIDED NOW.
HELL YEAH!
GAME, ARAYA. ARAYA LEADS 3-1.
I KNEW IT...!
カキ
カキ
カキ
カキ
GAME, ARAYA. ARAYA LEADS 4-1.

AT THAT POINT, HE'LL BEND FORWARD FOR JUST A SECOND.
WHEN ARAYA-KUN ATTACKS, HE STARTS OFF BY SENDING THE BALL TO THE OUTER EDGES WITH A TIGHTLY ANGLED SHOT.
HE'S SO MUCH EASIER TO UNDERSTAND THAN IWASA-KUN!
HE'S CONFIDENT IN BOTH HIS POWER AND SPEED, SO, SURPRISINGLY, KEEPS TO THE SAME OLD STRIKING PATTERN.
AFTER THAT, HE'LL AIM ENTIRELY FOR OPEN COURT.
IF I KNOW WHERE HE SENDS JUST ONE BALL...

HAH!
HE BENT FORWARD!
HAH!

SO FAST!
!?
HUH ?!
HAH!
I'M TAKING CONTROL OF THIS MATCH HERE AND NOW!
EI-CHAN'S MOVING UP THE COURT!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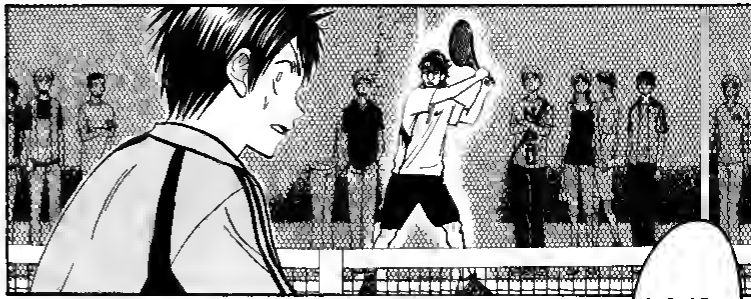
HE HAS EVERY ANGLE COVERED ...
IF I MOVE UP TO ATTACK, THEN HE'LL COUNTER. AND IF I STAY BACK TO PROTECT MY KEEP, HE'LL JUST OVERWHELM ME WITH POWER AND SPEED.

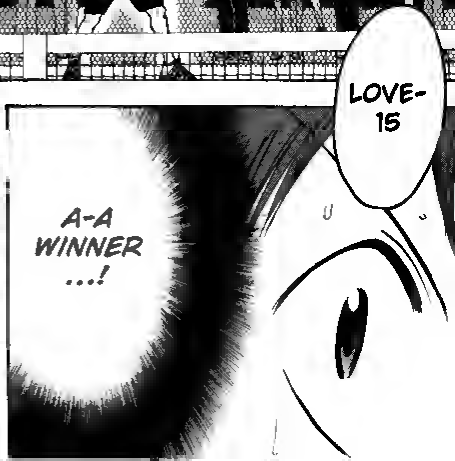
SHOW ME WHAT YOU'VE GOT UP YOUR SLEEVE NOW, MARUO-KUN
THAT'S CHARACTERISTIC OF ARAYA - USING A SINGLE SHOT TO TURN EVERYTHING AROUND.

WHAT CAN I DO —?
SO WHAT DO I DO NOW?

IT GAVE OFF SUCH A GOOD FEELING ...
AH, HE ALMOST HAD THAT ONE!



FIGURES THAT ARAYA WOULD PULL THAT ONE OFF... BUT MARUO WAS PRETTY GOOD RIGHT THEN, TOO.
おおっ
WHOA!

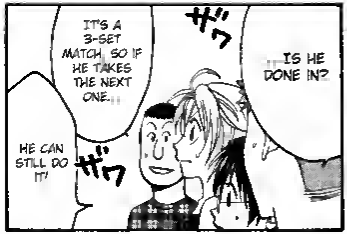

A-A WINNER ...!
LOVE-15

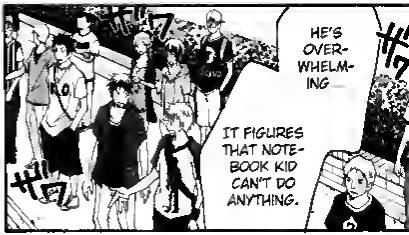
NOW, I'VE GOT TO FIGURE OUT WHAT TO DO ABOUT THAT STUPID COUNTERING SHOT...
IT'S ALWAYS GOT TO BE SOME-THING ...
THERE'S GOT TO BE SOMETHING I CAN DO.
HAH!
SOME-THING IN THAT COUN-TER.
UGH!!
LOVE-30.

HE CAN'T DO IT! HE'S GOING TO LOSE!
HAH!
IT'S NOT THAT EASY TO SCORE POINTS OFF OF ARAYA!
WELL, I GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT, BUT STILL...
THE CLUB HE'S PART OF IS FAMOUS FOR TRAINING ALL THEIR MEMBERS WITH MODERN TENNIS FOCUSED ON POWER AND SPEED.
DOESN'T MATTER WHETHER THEY LIKE IT OR NOT, ALL MEMBERS ARE FORCED TO PLAY IN THE EXACT SAME STYLE OF TENNIS.
WHY DO THEY DO THAT?
THE PROBLEM LIES WITH COST-EFFECTIVENESS.
A LOT OF LABOR, TIME, AND MONEY GOES INTO THE MINUTE INSTRUCTIONS TO MEET AN INDIVIDUAL'S NEEDS. THERE'S THE RISK OF HAVING IT ALL BE FOR NOTHING IF SOMETHING GOES WRONG.
BUT WHEN IT COMES TO POWER AND SPEED, THEY JUST NEED TO MAKE ALL THE MEMBERS RUN AND STRENGTHEN UP THEIR BODIES, THEN THE PLAYERS ARE CERTAIN TO IMPROVE.
WHAT'S MORE, ONLY A PLAYER WHO MAKES IT TO THE FINAL MATCHES WILL RECEIVE INDIVIDUAL INSTRUCTION
THIS IS A PATTERN FOLLOWED BY A LOT OF CLUBS OVERSEAS THAT PRODUCES A LARGE NUMBER OF PROFESSIONALS
WOW, THAT'S ROUGH.

ARAYA IS A PLAYER WHO SURVIVED BY USING POWER AND SPEED.
HE'S A CHILD SENT DOWN FROM ABOVE IN A MODERN-AGE TENNIS.
GUH
UGH!
HAH!
AND HERE IS A CROSS!
IT'S ALREADY REACHED THE SET POINT...
40-LOVE.

FIRST SET WON BY ARAYA. GAME COUNT, 6-1.
おっ
YEAH!
おお
ARAYA GOT THE FIRST SET!


IS HE DONE IN?
IT'S A 3-SET MATCH, SO IF HE TAKES THE NEXT ONE...
HE CAN STILL DO IT!


HE'S OVER-WHELM-ING...
IT FIGURES THAT NOTE-BOOK KID CAN'T DO ANYTHING.

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!!!
!!
OH?!
.AMAZING, HUH... TO THE OPPONENT,
THIS POINT IN TIME GIVES OFF A FEELING OF EERINESS.
.....
カリ
カリ
カリ

LEAN THE BODY FORWARD A LITTLE BIT!

★ TRAITS OF ARAI-MAMI'S STROKE

- WILL ALWAYS AIM FOR THE OPEN COURT, EVEN IF BY A LITTLE BIT
- WILL FUNDAMENTALLY ALTERNATE THE COURSES OF HIS SHOT TO THE LEFT AND RIGHT MONOTONOUSLY.
- BECAUSE OF HIS RISING SHOTS, THE TEMPO WILL BE FAST.

★ THE COUNTERING ATTACK

AFTER USING THIS, HE WILL DO A CROSS OR A STRAIGHT
IT'S A SHOT AIMING FOR AN ACE

< TRAITS OF ARAI >

- THE CHANCE OF COUNTERING FROM SIDE TO SIDE IS OVER 90%.
- IN THE CASE OF A FOREHAND, WILL DROP THE (LEFT) SHOULDER AND GO FOR A CROSS.
- IN THE CASE OF A BACKHAND, WILL DROP THE (RIGHT) SHOULDER AND GO FOR A CROSS.
- BASICALLY HAS GOOD CONTROL OF THE BALL AND A LOT OF POWER.
- HAS MANY INSTANCES OF TIMES WHEN MOVING UP THE COURT (TO ATTACK), BUT MAKES ATTACKS NORMALLY.

LEAN THE BODY FORWARD A LITTLE BIT.

TRAITS OF MARUO KUNIS STROKE

- WILL ALWAYS AIM FOR THE OPEN COURT. WHEN IT BY A LITTLE BIT.
- WILL FUNDAMENTALLY ALTERNATE THE COURSES OF HIS SHOT TO THE LEFT AND RIGHT MONOTONOUSLY.
- BECAUSE OF HIS RISING SHOTS, THE TEMPO WILL BE FAST.

THE COUNTERZING ATTACK

AFTER VISING THIS, HE WILL DO A CROSS OR A STRAIGHT. IT'S A SHOT AIMING FOR AN ACE.

< TRAITS OF MARUO >

- THE CHANCE OF COUNTERZING FROM SIDE TO SIDE IS OVER 90 PERCENT.
- IN THE CASE OF A FOREHAND, WILL DROP THE LEFT SHOULDER AND GO FOR A CROSS.
- IN THE CASE OF A BACKHAND, WILL DROP THE RIGHT SHOULDER, AND GO FOR A CROSS.
- BASICALLY HAS GOOD CONTROL OF THE BALL AND A LOT OF POWER.
- HAS MANY INSTANCES OF TIMES WHEN MOVING UP THE COURT (TO ATTACK), BUT MAKES ATTACKS NORMALLY.

I'LL GO ON FROM HERE!

I NOW KNOW SOME METHODS THAT WILL WORK AGAINST THAT COUNTER. .

ALL RIGHT THEN ...

SECOND SET, MARUO SERVES.

	1	2	3
ARAYA	6	0	
MARUO	1	0	

I CAN STILL MAKE IT!

SO I'VE GOT TO TAKE THIS ONE!

THANKS TO THAT, HE WON A SET OFF ME,

IT WAS THE USUAL ATTACK PATTERN.
HE'D HIT OVER A STRONG CROSS TO SEND ME TO THE OUTER BOUNDARIES OF THE COURT AND THEN AIM THE NEXT SHOT AT THE OPEN COURT.
THIS ONE'S A CROSS!
HE LEANED FOR-WARD!
BUT I DIDN'T HAVE ENOUGH POWER TO SCORE FROM THE BACK OF THE COURT, SO I MOVED UP THE COURT QUICKLY.
HAH!
THANKS TO HIS HABITS, I WAS TEM-PORARILY ABLE TO TAKE CON-TROL OF THE MATCH.

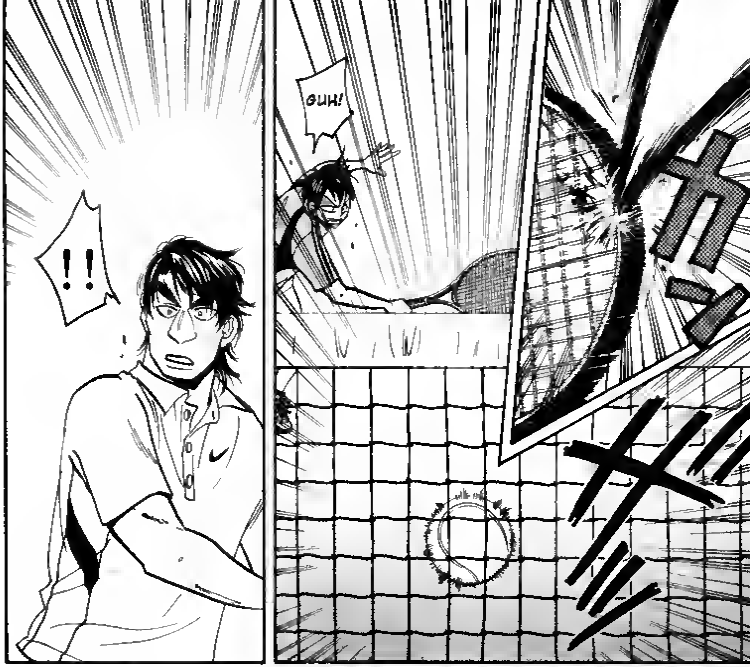
HE'S GOING TO COUNTER HERE!
AH
WHEN MOLTING UP THE COURT (TO ATTACK) BUT MAKES ATTACKS.
BACKHAND
FOREHAND
HIS LEFT SHOULDER DROPPED!
CROSS
CROSS!
AH

LOVE-15.
THERE'S ARAYA'S COUNTER AGAIN!
オォッ
ONCE IT HITS YOUR COURT, IT CAN'T BE STOPPED!
It's a demon's passing shot!
MARUO WILL BE IN TROUBLE IF HE DOESN'T HOLD HIS OWN HERE!

RETURNING THE BALL WON'T BE SO EASY JUST FROM KNOWING HIS HABITS
DAMN IT...
HIS REACTIONS HAVE GOTTEN FASTER NOW
IN THAT CASE...
ORA.
HAH!

HE'LL PUSH ME OUT TO THE BOUNDARY BY SHOOTING OUT A BALL AT A HIGH-SPEED!
AFTER THIS CROSS
I'LL GO UP THE COURT
USING A SLOW, DEEP SHOT!
HAH!
BECAUSE HE USES THAT SPEED FOR HIS COUNTER,

BUT MAKES ATTACKS
BACKHAND
CROSS
HE DIDN'T DROP HIS SHOULDER! IT'S A STRAIGHT!
HAH!


GUH!
!!

HE READ MY PLAY AND MOVED FOR IT
SO YOU THINK STUDYING WILL HELP YOU TAKE THE WIN?
AH, HE ALMOST HAD THAT ONE!
0-30
BUT THAT ONE REALLY FELT LIKE IT WOULD MAKE IT, EI-CHAN!
DAMN IT!

TRY IT IF YOU THINK YOU CAN DO IT!
YOU'VE GOT ME CURIOUS NOW...
HAH!
ONE MORE TIME!
FWU
GAME SET WON BY EGAWA.

THE WINNER OF THE KANAGAWA JR. CHAMPIONSHIPS IN THE MEN'S 12-AND-UNDER DIVISION GOES TO EGAWA TAKUMA-KUN.
THE RUNNER-UP IS ARAYA HIROSHI-KUN.
EGAWA TAKUMA, AGE 11
ARAYA HIROSHI, AGE 10
EGAWA-KUN IS QUITE AMAZING!
HE APPEARS TO BE ONE OF THE MOST TALENTED KIDS WE'VE HAD IN A DECADE.
I'D LOVE TO ENTRUST HIM THE FUTURE OF THE TENNIS WORLD IN JAPAN
DAMN IT! THIS WAS MY TENTH LOSS TO HIM.
WHAT A JOKE
I'LL BECOME THE EXACT SAME PRO-FESSIONAL AS YOU!
I WON'T BE SECOND TO YOU FOREVER!

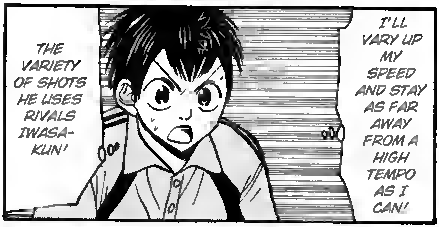
FOR ME TO BEAT DOWN THAT SERVE AND VOLLEY OF YOURS,
I'LL COME UP FROM BEHIND AND USE MY POWER AND SPEED TO THEIR FULLEST.
I'LL CATCH UP TO YOU WITH MY SPEED,
THRASH YOU WITH MY POWER,
AND WIN!
MY COUNTER IS THE RESULT OF ALL MY HARD WORK SO FAR!
IT REPRESENTS EVERYTHING MY TENNIS STANDS FOR!
I'LL GET PAST BOTH THIS KID AND EGAWA TAKUMA!
THEN I'LL PUT MY SIGHTS ON BEING AN AMAZING PROFESSIONAL!

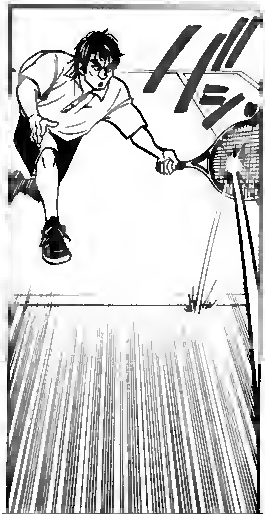
THERE'S NO ROOM IN MY GOAL FOR YOU TO INTERFERE!

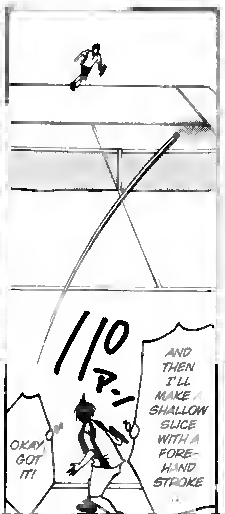
GAME, ARAYA, 1-0.
OH YEAH.
WHOA! WHAT THE HECK WAS THAT?!
THERE'S NO WAY YOU'RE WINNING OFF OF ME!
1 2 3
ARAYA 6 1
MARUO 1 0
THAT WAS HIS TEMPO JUST NOW...
I CAN'T GET SUCKED INTO IT!
THERE'S A BIG DIFFERENCE BETWEEN OUR POWER AND SPEED...
IT WILL TAKE SOME TIME, BUT I'LL HAVE TO GATHER SOME INFORMATION AND COME UP WITH STRATEGIES BIT BY BIT...
IT'S ALREADY THE SECOND SET...I'VE GOT TO HURRY!

SLOW DOWN THE PACE WITH MY RETURN.

HAH!

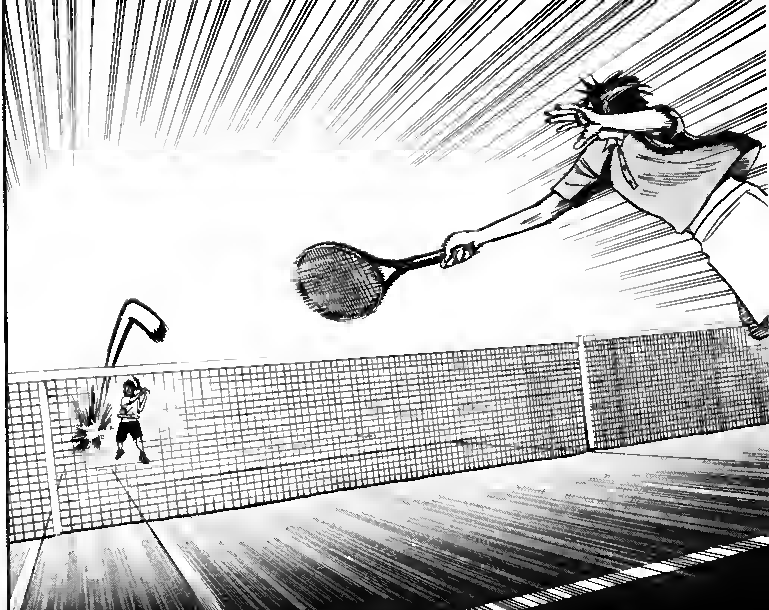

THE VARIETY OF SHOTS HE USES RIVALS IWASA-KUN!
I'LL VARY UP MY SPEED AND STAY AS FAR AWAY FROM A HIGH TEMPO AS I CAN!




OKAY GOT IT!
AND THEN I'LL MAKE A SHALLOW SLICE WITH A FORE-HAND STROKE.

A DEEP SPIN WITH A BACK-HAND STROKE.

I'LL SEND A SOFT, DEEP AND DIFFICULT TO COUNTER BALL DIAGONALLY ACROSS THE COURT TO MAKE ARAYA RUN FOR IT!
ALL RIGHT! BRING ON THE COUNTER!
PART OF THE REASON FOR MAKING HIM RUN
IS THAT IT INCREASES THE CHANCES OF HIM MAKING A STRAIGHT SHOT,
BUT FOR NOW, I'LL LOOK OUT FOR EVERYTHING!
BRING IT ON!

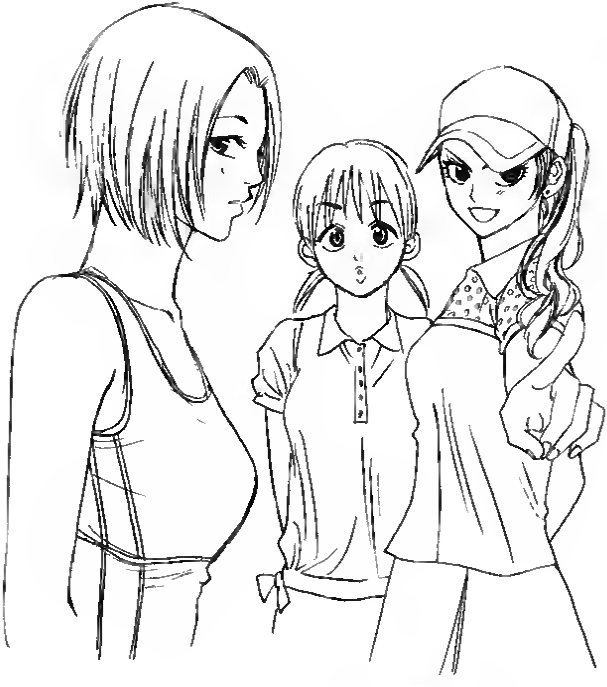


AH
...

LOVE-15.
I DID IT!
I GOT MY FIRST POINT OFF A COUNTER!

GOOD GOING, EI-CHAN!
He finally scored a point!
MARUO-KUN IS AMAZING!
HE REALLY GOT INTO THE RHYTHM THIS TIME!
YEAH... THAT POINT WAS A BIG ONE.

AH...
SOMEHOW... I HAVE A BAD FEELING ABOUT THIS.



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ライバルがいます。

Baby Steps

LOVE-15.
THAT'S THE FIRST POINT I'VE SCORED OFF OF HIS COUNTER!
1
2
3
ARAYA
6
1
MARUO
1
0

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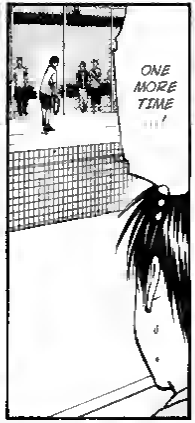
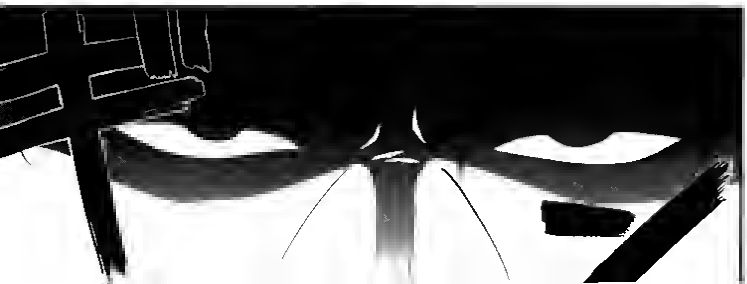
#40: A CLUE

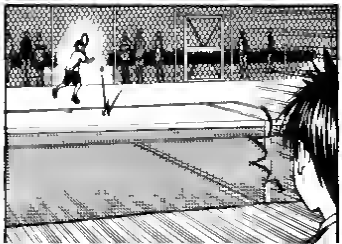

ONE MORE TIME!

DEPENDING ON HOW I FIGHT THIS OUT, THIS DIFFERENCE BETWEEN OUR SPEED AND POWER CAN BE BURIED OUT OF SIGHT!
I CAN DO THIS!



HAH!

KUH!



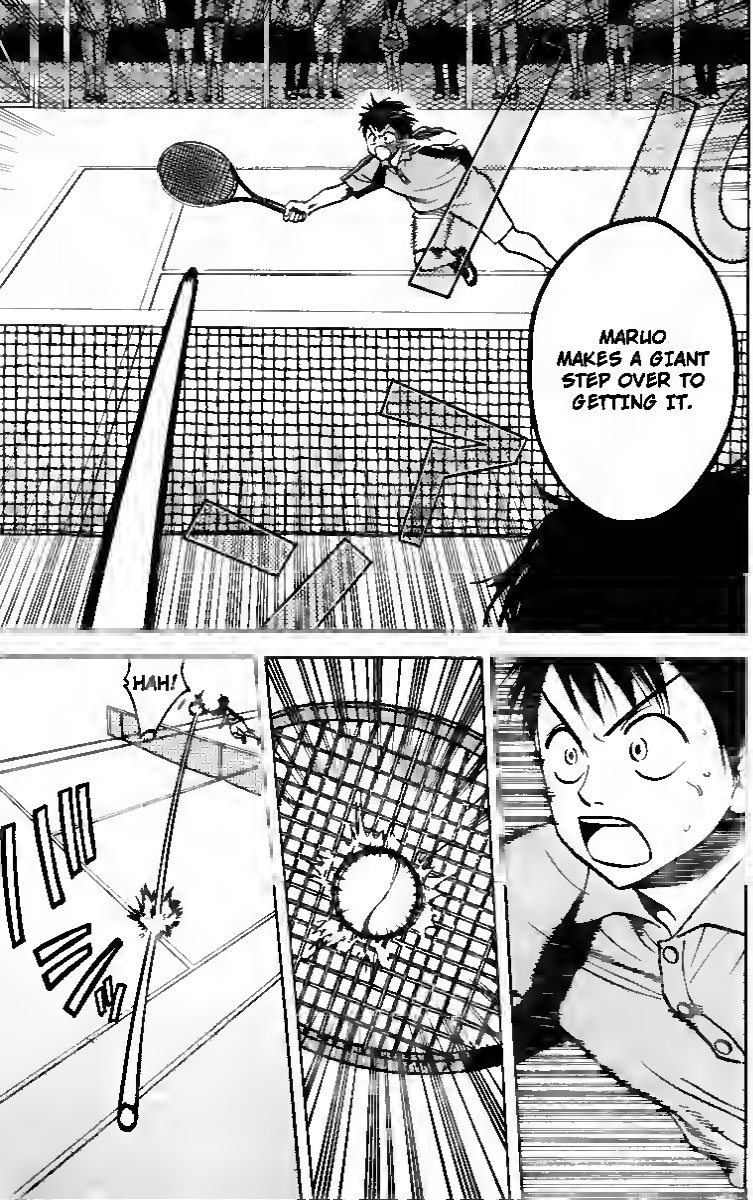
UGH!

GUH!
UOOO!!
I SWEAR FIRE CAME OUT OF THAT LAST BALL!
WHOA! ARAYA LET OUT A ROAR!
PLASTIC

HAH!
DAMN... THAT POWERFUL FIRST SERVE DIRECTED AT THE CORNERS IS REALLY HARD TO GET TO!
15 ALL.
THERE'S NO ROOM FOR ME TO TAKE CONTROL OF THE FLOW!
30-15.
40-15.
HAH!
GAME, ARAYA. ARAYA LEADS 2-0.
HELL YEAH!
THAT'S ARAYA FOR YOU! HE'S NOT GOING TO GIVE AWAY A GAME HE SERVES TO ANYONE!

DAMN...
HE'S A BEAST ...
I THOUGHT HIS CHANCE HAD FINALLY COME, SINCE HE'D GOTTEN A POINT OFF THAT COUNTER ...
JUST THE OPPOSITE, THAT UPLIFT IN HIS MOOD WORKED AGAINST HIM...
BUT YOU COULD STILL SAY THAT ONE POINT WAS A BIG ONE.
IT'S MY TURN TO SERVE THIS TIME!
THERE'S NOT MUCH TO MY SERVE, SO I'LL HAVE TO THINK HARD ON THE COURSE AND PROBABILITY FOR IT!
A SOMEWHAT SHALLOW SLICE INTO OPEN COURT!

THEN I'LL DO A DEEP SHOT WITH A DELAYED SPIN HERE AND RUN UP COURT!
HAVING STOPPED THE COUNTER ONCE, THE SITUATION HAS CHANGED
IT'S THE SAME ATTACK PATTERN AS BEFORE,
BUT IN THAT SINGLE SECOND...
IT'S ONLY SPARING A SECOND OF HIS TIME TO JUDGE WHERE TO HIT THE BALL
ARAYA-KUN CHECKS MARUO-KUN'S POSITION BY REFLEX


MARUO MAKES A GIANT STEP OVER TO GETTING IT.
HAH!

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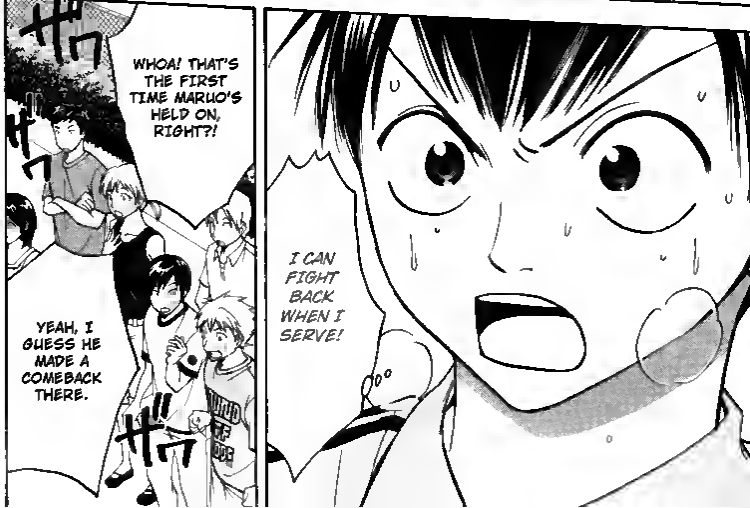
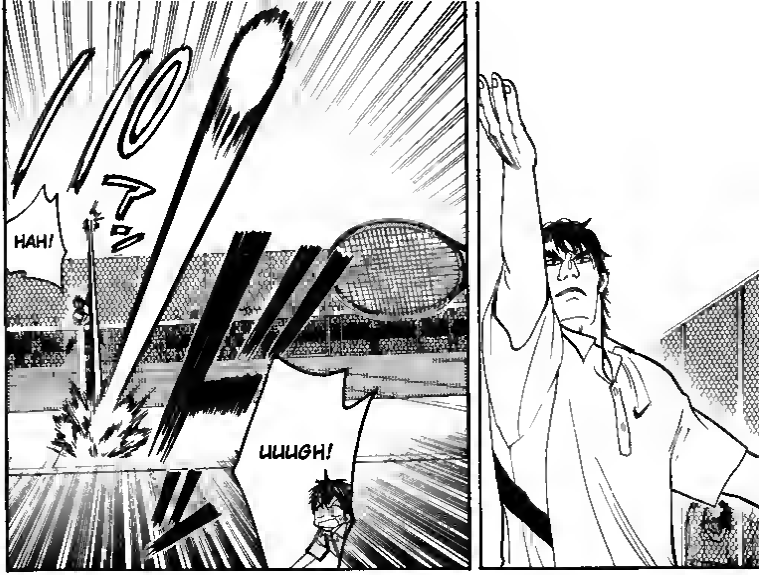
ALL RIGHT!
15-LOVE.
FOR NOW, I'M GOING TO KEEP A HOLD ON TO THE GAME'S MOMENTUM WHILE I'M SERVING!
IF I LET UP EVEN THE SLIGHTEST, I GET ATTACKED RIGHT THEN AND THERE
15 ALL.
RAH!

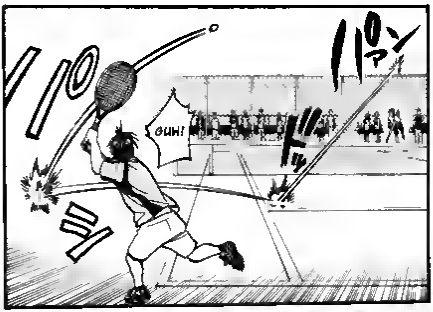
HAH!
BUT I'LL KEEP UP WITH THE COURSE OF THE SHOT...
AND IF I TAKE CHARGE OF THE FLOW AND KEEP IT...
THERE!
30-15.
30 ALL.
40-30.
HA!

	1	2	3
ARAYA	6	2	
MARUO	1	1	



....
PRETTY SIMPLE, BUT REALLY GOOD NONETHELESS.
YEAH, BUT THAT KIND OF EDGY TENNIS IS JUST HOW MARUO PLAYS.
HIS GAME'S ALSO BEEN PRETTY SHAKY.
YOU THINK SO? BUT HE'S ONLY HELD UP FOR ONE GAME.
EVEN IF IT'S NOT DONE WELL, HE HAS TO BREAK THE FLOW
AND EVEN IF HE DOES, IT'LL ONLY BE A TIE.
He's not out of danger yet
NO... HE HAS TO BREAK THE FLOW IN THE FIRST GAMES OF THE SECOND SET. HE COULD STILL LOSE RIGHT NOW.
IF HE PROTECTS HIS SIDE WHEN SERVING, THEN HE CAN'T LOSE, RIGHT?
YEAH, IT'S FINALLY GETTING GOOD
I'VE GOT TO BREAK THE FLOW DOWN SOMEWHERE!


HAH!
UUUGH!


OUH!

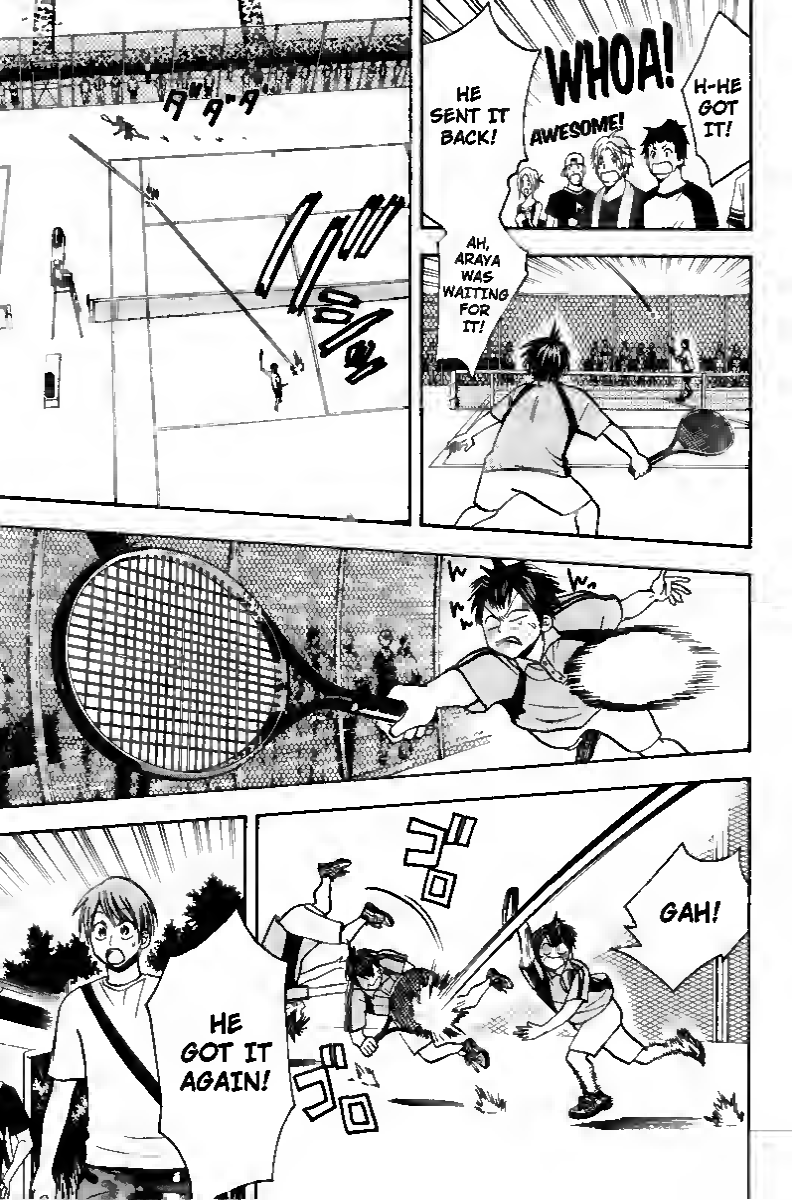
AN ACE SERVE!
15-LOVE.

IF I'M BEAT HERE, THERE'S NOTHING I'LL BE ABLE TO DO..

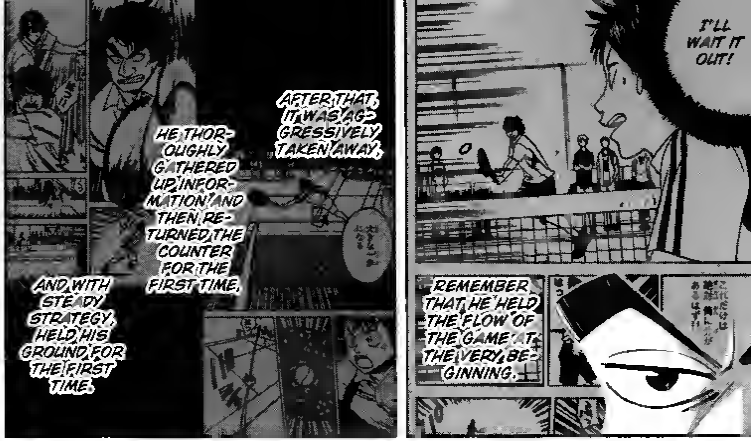
I'M SOMEHOW MANAGING TO GET THE BALL BACK OVER THE NET, BUT HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO TAKE CONTROL OF THE FLOW FROM THERE?

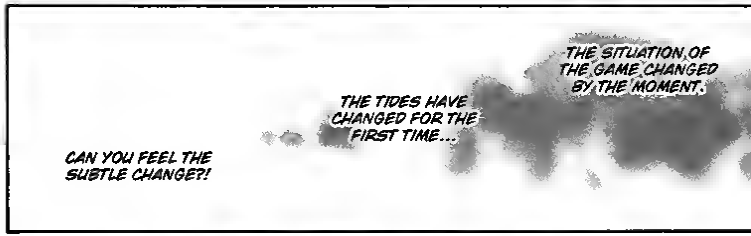
GUH!
I WAS SO CAUTIOUS ABOUT READING INTO THE CROSS THAT I DIDN'T REALLY HIT IT BACK WELL...
I'M ALWAYS ON THE DEFENSIVE WHEN RETURNING SHOTS!
AND STAYING AT THE BACK OF THE COURT GIVES ME NO TIME TO THINK!
AND WHILE I CAN'T CHANGE THE FLOW, I'LL JUST FALL FIREY TO THAT COUNTER BY MOVING UP THE COURT
UGH!
ANY-THING ... UH!
SOMETHING TO BREAK THROUGH THE SITUATION I'M IN RIGHT NOW?!
IS THERE NOTHING I CAN DO?!
NOTHING TO TAKE BACK THE FLOW OF THE GAME ?!

HUHN!
HAH!
ドッ
ガシャ


WHOA!
H-HE GOT IT!
AWESOME!
HE SENT IT BACK!
AH, ARAYA WAS WAITING FOR IT!
GAH!
HE GOT IT AGAIN!

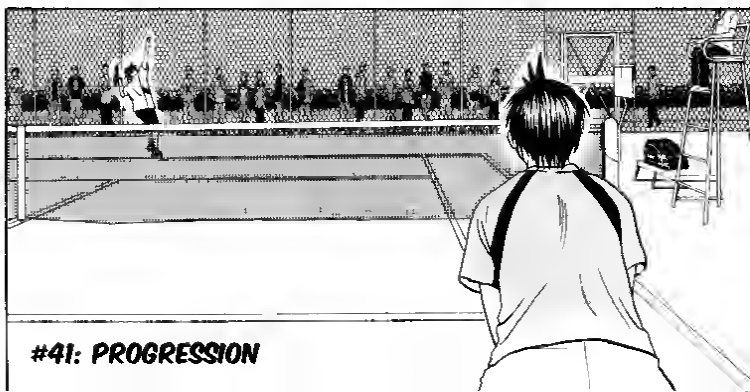
OUT! 15 ALL.
UWA... LUCKY!
GOOD JOB KEEPING UP WITH THE BALL, ANIKI!
!?
WHAT...? WHY'D HIS SHOT GO OUT?
HE HASN'T DONE THAT FOR A WHILE.
TCH.
HIS ATTACK WAS SLOW, BUT,


AND WITH STEADY STRATEGY, HELD HIS GROUND FOR THE FIRST TIME.
HE THOROUGHLY GATHERED UP INFORMATION AND THEN RETURNED THE COUNTER FOR THE FIRST TIME.
AFTER THAT, IT WAS AGGRESSIVELY TAKEN AWAY.
I'LL WAIT IT OUT!
REMEMBER THAT, HE HELD THE FLOW OF THE GAME AT THE VERY BEGINNING.


CAN YOU FEEL THE SUBTLE CHANGE?!
THE TIDES HAVE CHANGED FOR THE FIRST TIME...
THE SITUATION OF THE GAME CHANGED BY THE MOMENT.

YOU'RE TAKING HOLD OF THE FLOW FOR THE SECOND TIME!

ARAYA-KUN HASN'T MISSED AT ALL SINCE HE GOT PUMPED UP...
SO WHY NOW?!
15 ALL.
1 2 3
Araya 6 2
Maru 1 1
ARAYA'S QUICK TEMPERED AND HASTY.
COULD IT BE THAT...?
I'VE BEEN STRUGGLING OVER HERE, TOO.
IF...
THAT'S REALLY THE CASE...
DID THE FLOW OF THE GAME CHANGE AGAIN?!
I'VE HELD MY GROUND WHEN SERVING AND RETURNED THAT COUNTER ...
Baby Steps
ベイビーステップ



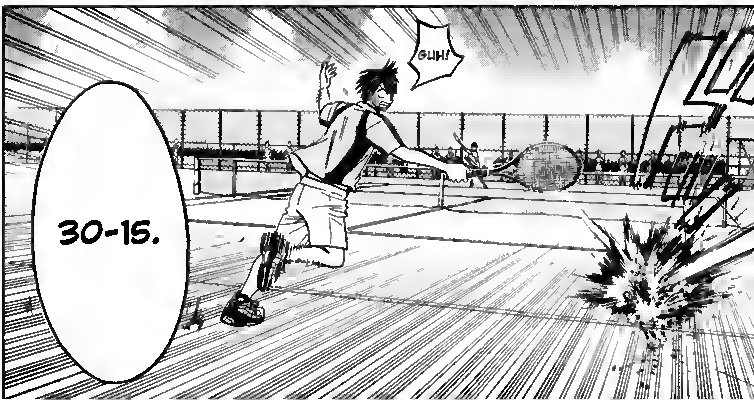
#41: PROGRESSION

HAH!
KUH!
HAH!
THE BASTARD IS SO PERSISTENT
HAH!
SIT DOWN QUIETLY AND LET ME PAST!
I'LL BEAT TAKUMA AND AIM TO BE A PRO!
UNGAH!

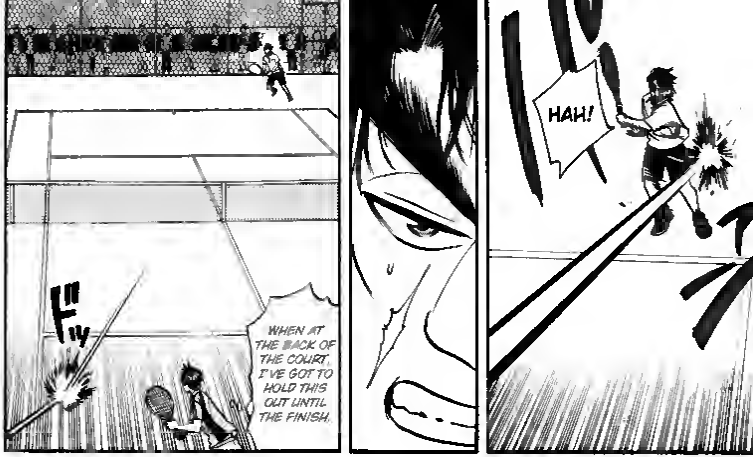
GOOD LOB!
IT'S PRETTY DEEP!
HUNNN

MAKE SURE TO HAVE TIME TO GET BACK AND KEEP CHANGING THE PACE SINCE HE'S BAD AT THAT!
IN TIMES OF TROUBLE, SEND IN A DEEP, LOFTY BALL THAT WILL HANG IN THE AIR FOR A WHILE!
GUNUUUH!
HAH!
AND I DON'T KNOW IF I'LL EVER MAKE IT BACK AGAIN!
I'VE FINALLY MADE IT THIS FAR TO THE SEMIFINALS.
BUT DON'T LET HIM!
HAH!
THE HASTY ARAYA-KUN WILL WANT TO END THE MATCH QUICKLY

I WANT TO STAY HERE, EVEN IF ONLY FOR A SECOND LONGER!
I'M GOING TO CARRY THIS OUT UNTIL THE END!

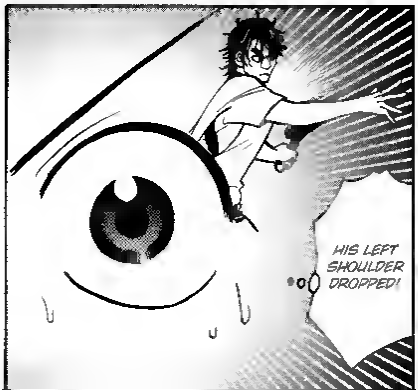

GUH!
30-15.

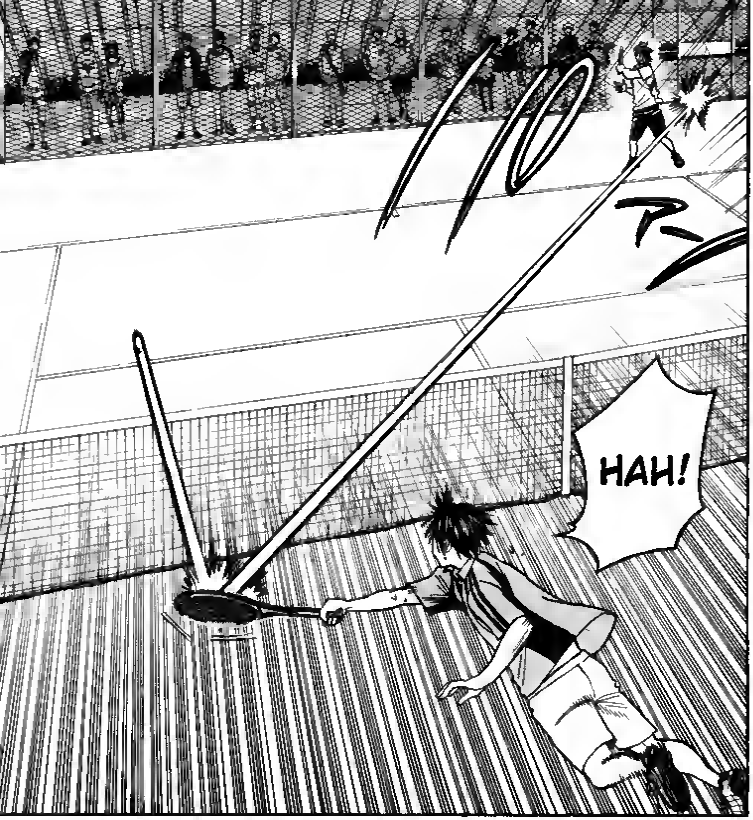
ANIKI HANGED IN THERE... BUT IN THE END, ARAYA GOT IT
AH... HE ONLY HAD A BIT FURTHER TO GO.
OKAY!
DAMN...
GUH!
HUH?
BUT THE WAY THE MATCH IS UNFOLDING IS CHANGING...
ORA!


WHEN AT THE BACK OF THE COURT, I'VE GOT TO HOLD THIS OUT UNTIL THE FINISH.
HAH!

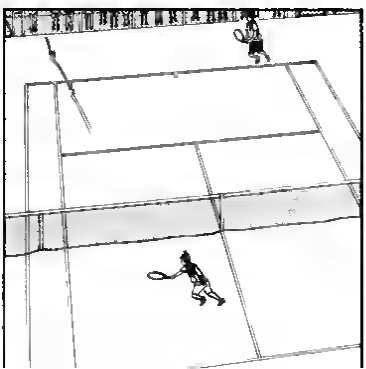
GET PAST HIM!

BUT THE SECOND I SEE MY CHANCE, I'M HEADING UP THE COURT!


HIS LEFT SHOULDER DROPPED!


HAH!

30
ALL.



YEAH!
THAT'S THE SECOND TIME I'VE RETURNED HIS COUNTER!
AH, I GET IT... RATHER THAN POWER AND SPEED, IT'S COURT COVERAGE AND CONTROL THAT WILL DECIDE THE MATCH...
IN OTHER WORDS... ANIKI'S CONTROLLING THE FLOW OF THE MATCH
I'M GOING TO CRUSH YOU

わっ
HEAD
GAME, SET, MATCH! WON BY EGAWA TAKUMA, COUNT 6-3, 6-4.
IT SEEMS THAT TAKUMA-SAN WON
YEAH
!!

ビッ
GUH!
RAAAH!

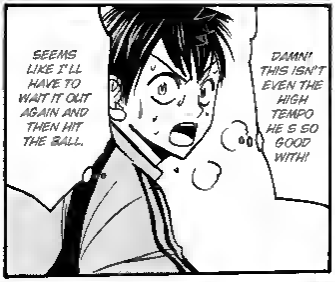
UWAH!
ONE MORE POINT AND HE'LL BREAK!
ALL RIGHT, AWESOME! IT'S EI-CHAN'S PACE NOW!
OUT! 30-40.
!!
WHOA... WHAT'S GOING ON WITH YOU, ARAYA?
THIS COULD BE IT...

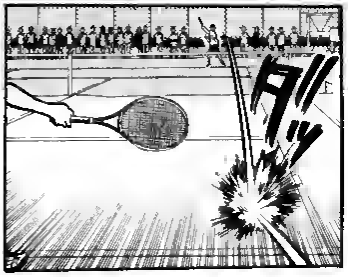
HUH?!

ズガン
ズガン
WH-WHAT WAS THAT?!
FORGET ABOUT TAKUMA
ハァ
ハァ
ハァ
IT'S JUST A REPEAT OF THE SAME, OLD THING.
ザワ
ザワ
I'VE RUSHED A TON UP UNTIL NOW... GOTTEN PISSED OFF... THAT'S NOWHERE NEAR BEING A GOOD THING!

HE'S GETTING SMUG...
THE ONE IN FRONT OF ME IS THAT GUY!
MY OPPONENT IS NOT TAKUMA!
WITHOUT A DOUBT, THE GUY KNOWS MY TENNIS AND PERSONALITY AND IS COMING UP WITH A STRATEGY FOR IT.
AND WITHOUT GETTING TICKED OFF.
WITHOUT RUSHING,
SO I'VE GOT TO FIGHT HIM HEAD-ON,

HAH!

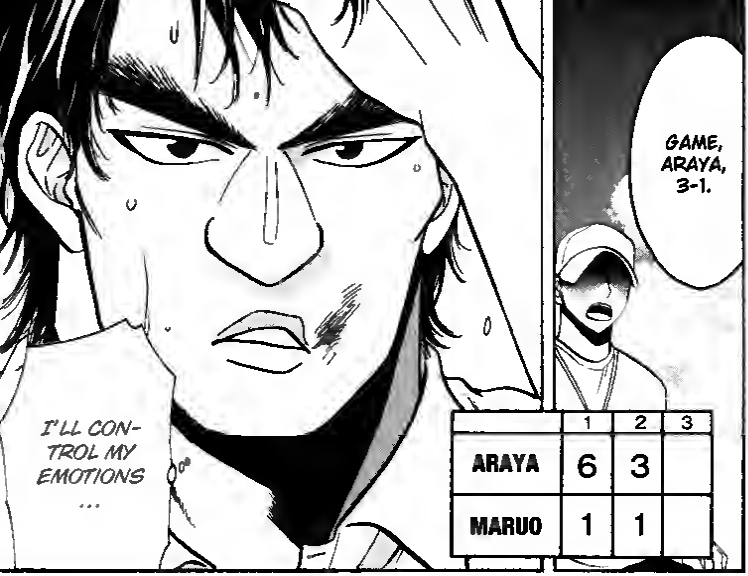

SEEMS LIKE I'LL HAVE TO WAIT IT OUT AGAIN AND THEN HIT THE BALL.
DAMN! THIS ISN'T EVEN THE HIGH TEMPO HE S SO GOOD WITH!


A!!

AND THAT'S EXACTLY WHY I'VE GOT TO CONTROL THEM!

FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE, MY EMOTIONS COME OUT IN MY GAME.

GAME, ARAYA. ARAYA LEADS 3-1.
I WON'T HAND OVER THE FLOW OF THE GAME SO EASILY!
!!



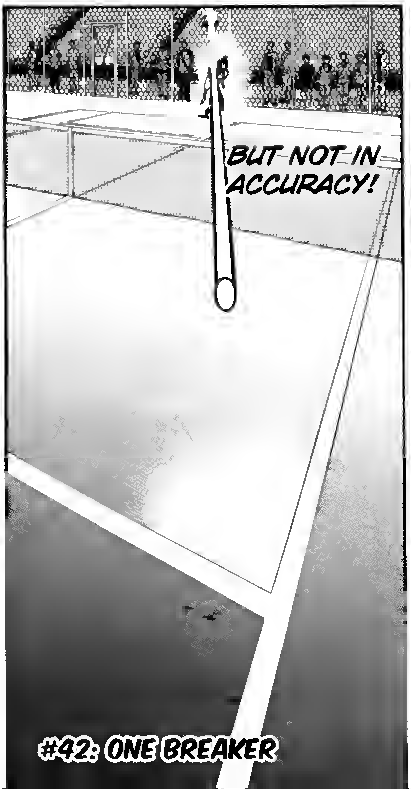
GOES TO SHOW THAT THE 2ND RANKED PLAYER IN THE ENTIRE PREFECTURE WON'T GO LIGHTLY ON HIS OPPONENT...
I WAS ON THE VERGE OF HAVING SUCH A GOOD EDGE, AND HE STOLE IT BACK AGAIN!

Baby Steps
ベイビーステップ

NO... GOT TO THINK OF WHAT'S COMING UP INSTEAD
DID HE KNOW THAT HE'D BEEN CHANGING?
IS THIS A DIFFERENCE IN OUR EXPERIENCE, TOO?
AND IT'S AMAZING HOW FAST HE RECOVERED

I'LL PLAY IN A WAY NOT TO AVOID GIVING CONTROL OVER TO HIM.
P-hew
THE FLOW'S NOT BAD, SO I'VE DEFINITELY GOT TO HOLD MY GROUND!

MY TURN TO SERVE


BUT NOT IN ACCURACY!
#42: ONE BREAKER

I MAY LOSE IN SPEED AND POWER,

BREAK DOWN THE TIMING BY VARYING THE SPEED OF MY SHOTS!
HAH!
HAH!
HAH!
THEN ATTACK STRATEGI-CALLY!
HE'S GOOD!
HE MADE A SHALLOW SLICE RIGHT AFTER PUTTING A DEEP, BOUNC-ING SPIN ON HIS PREVIOUS SHOT!

HE'S COME UP THE COURT AGGRESSIVELY!
FUH!
THE COURT BEHIND HIM IS OPEN!
NOW TO DASH UP FAST!
HAH!

Phew
NO... KEEP IT COOL.
Tch
I'VE GOT TO FIGHT AGAINST THIS GUY CALMLY
I ABSOLUTELY MUST HOLD MY GROUND HERE!
GOT IT!
15-0.
HAH!
HE COMPENSATES HIS LACK OF POWER WITH CONTROL...
NGH-GHGH!
HE DOESN'T HAVE THE SPEED AND SO HE START'S COVERING THE COURT A STEP AHEAD OF TIME...
HE DOESN'T HAVE A SINGLE ELABORATE WEAPON TO SHOW OFF...
HIS ONLY STRATEGY IS JUST WORKING AGAINST FAST TEMPOS.

BUT THERE AREN'T ANY PATHS TO GET BY HIM.

	1	2	3
ARAYA	6	3	
MARUO	1	2	

KUH!
HAH!
SO SLOW.
RAH!
BUT THE TIME WILL COME WHEN I GET THE CHANCE TO TAKE CONTROL OF THE GAME AGAIN.
NO GOOD! HE'S SHOOTING THE BALLS CALMLY...
GUH!

THERE AREN'T ANY OPENINGS LEFT!
THE FACT THAT YOU'RE LOOKING INTO YOUR OPPONENT'S WEAKNESS IS PROOF THAT BOTH YOU AND YOUR OPPONENT ARE STRONGER.
HE'S CORRECTING HIS WEAKNESSES!
GUH!
HAH!
WHAT SHOULD I DO?!
IS THERE ANYTHING I CAN DO?!
BUT I'VE GOT TO MAKE A BREAK POINT IN THIS SET SOMEWHERE OR I'LL LOSE!

HAH!
THE ONE WHO'LL WIN THIS GAME IS ME!
GAME, ARAYA, 4-2.
MARUO! TAKE A BREAK POINT AND CATCH UP WITH HIM!
ARAYA HELD HIS GROUND, TOO! THIS GAME IS GETTING AWESOME!

GAME, MARUO, 4-3.
HAH!
BI-CHAN! YOU'VE GOT THIS!
WHEN I'M RETURNING THE BALL, I CAN'T TAKE BACK CONTROL OF THE MATCH AT ALL!
BUT
I'M HOLDING THE FORT SOMEHOW
GAME, ARAYA, 5-3.

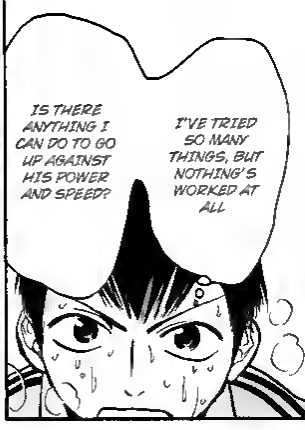
	1	2	3
ARAYA	6	4	
MARUO	1	3	

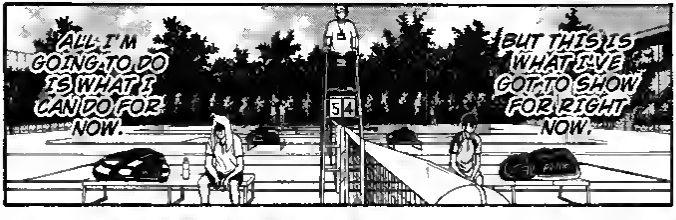
	1	2	3
ARAYA	6	5	
MARUO	1	3	

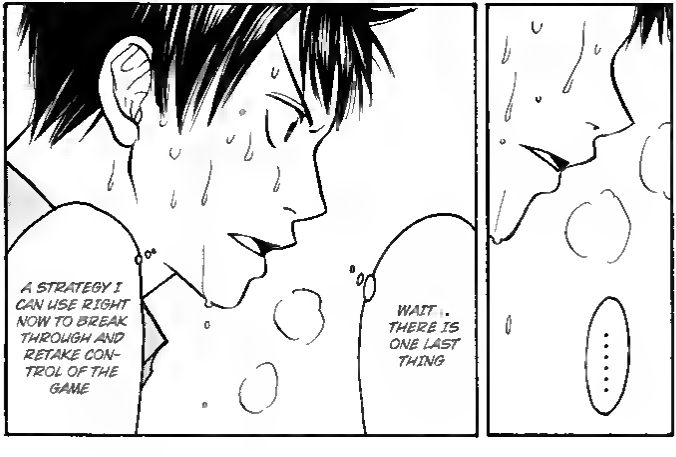
A PECULIARITY THAT KEPT BOTH SIDES ALIVE WAS WHEN THEY WERE UP TO SERVE. NEITHER WOULD HAND OVER THE CONTROL OF THE GAME DURING THEIR OFFENSE.
ONE BALL AFTER ANOTHER, THE GAME UNFOLDED TO BOTH HAVING HELD DOWN THEIR DEFENSE.
HAH!
GAME, MARUO, 5-4.
BUT EIICHIROU WAS SOON BACKED TOWARDS THE EDGE OF A CLIFF.
1 2 3
ARAYA 6 5
MARUO 1 4

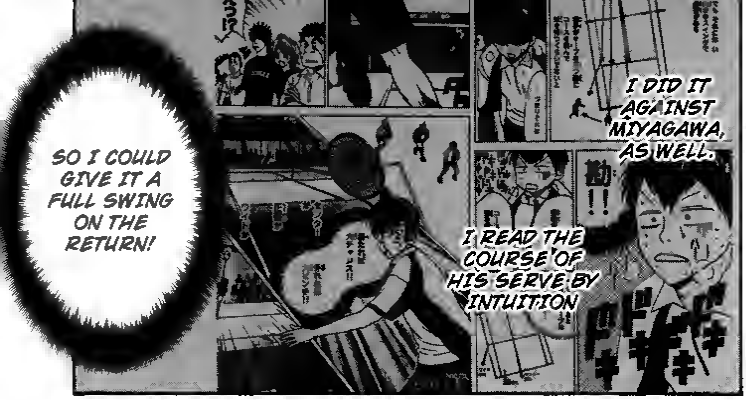
MARUO'S GOING TO LOSE IF HE DOESN'T BREAK HERE.
HE'S BEEN ABLE TO KEEP UP PRETTY WELL...
BUT IF HE BREAKS, IT'LL BE A TIE AND HE'LL HAVE PLENTY MORE CHANCES TO WIN IN THE THIRD SET.
OH YEAH? BUT THE ONLY GAME MARUO BROKE THROUGH IN WAS THE FIRST SET, WHEN ARAYA WAS IN A SLUMP, RIGHT?
THAT'S TRUE.
HE'D BETTER DO SOMETHING OR THE TURNAROUND'S GOING TO BE REALLY HARSH ON HIM.
ゴクゴクゴク
PWAH!

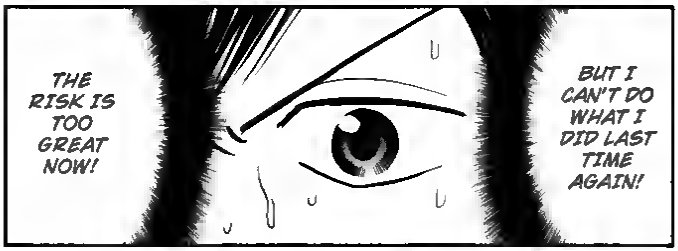
AND A LARGE NUMBER OF TECHNIQUES LIKE IWASA-KUN...
HE HAS A REALLY HARD HIT LIKE MIYAGAWA-KUN...


I'VE TRIED SO MANY THINGS, BUT NOTHING'S WORKED AT ALL
IS THERE ANYTHING I CAN DO TO GO UP AGAINST HIS POWER AND SPEED?


ALL I'M GOING TO DO IS WHAT I CAN DO FOR NOW.
BUT THIS IS WHAT I'VE GOT TO SHOW FOR RIGHT NOW.


A STRATEGY I CAN USE RIGHT NOW TO BREAK THROUGH AND RETAKE CONTROL OF THE GAME
WAIT... THERE IS ONE LAST THING
.....

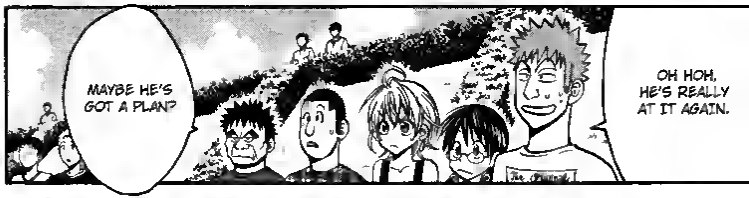

I DID IT AGAINST MIYAGAWA, AS WELL.
I READ THE COURSE OF HIS SERVE BY INTUITION
SO I COULD GIVE IT A FULL SWING ON THE RETURN!


THE RISK IS TOO GREAT NOW!
BUT I CAN'T DO WHAT I DID LAST TIME AGAIN!

I'LL HAVE TO RELY ON LUCK.
...ALL RIGHT, THEN.
I'M NOT GOING DOWN WITHOUT A FIGHT!

LAST TIME, I WAS FIGHTING FOR A POINT IN THE TIE-BREAKER, AND WAS ABLE TO RELY ON MY INSTINCTS...
THIS TIME IT'S A FULL GAME... RELYING ON MY INSTINCTS FOR FOUR STRAIGHT POINTS IS IMPOSSIBLE!

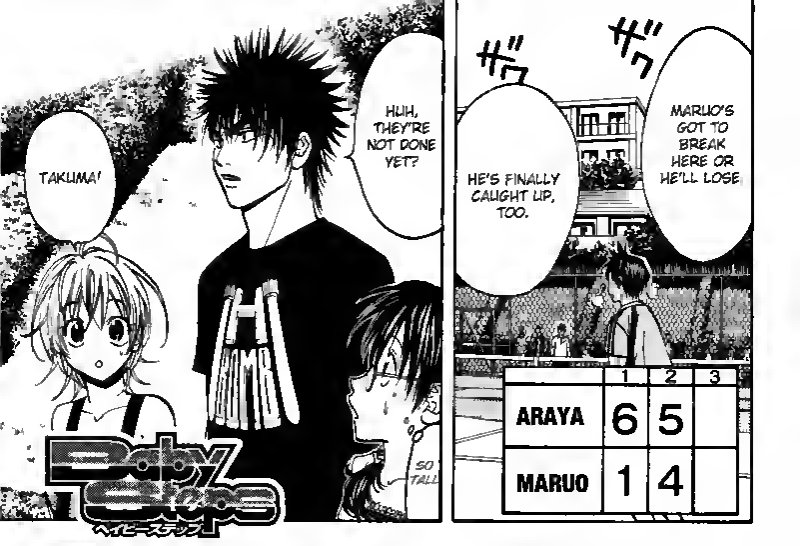
かきかきかき
I HAVE FAITH IN MY PER-SISTENCE!

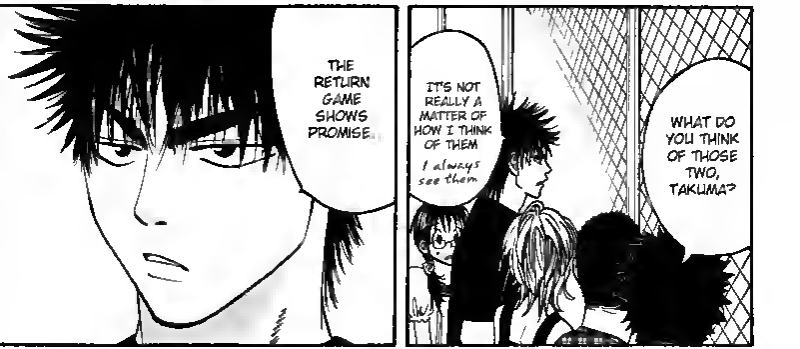

MAYBE HE'S GOT A PLAN?
OH HOH, HE'S REALLY AT IT AGAIN.

GOT IT!

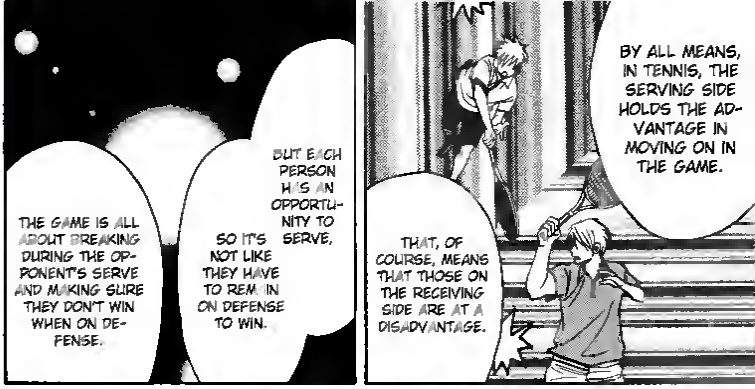
TIME!

I KNOW BOTH THEIR STYLES, SO IT'S NOT THAT.
WHAT'S THIS? YOU'RE WONDERING WHO WILL BE YOUR OPPONENT FOR THE FINALS?
TAKUMA!
HUH, THEY'RE STILL NOT DONE YET?
BOMB
BUT THIS IS SOMETHING I'VE GOT TO SEE.


HUH, THEY'RE NOT DONE YET?
TAKUMA!
SO TALL
Baby Steps
ベイビーステップ
MARUO'S GOT TO BREAK HERE OR HE'LL LOSE
HE'S FINALLY CAUGHT UP, TOO.
1 2 3
ARAYA 6 5
MARUO 1 4


THE RETURN GAME SHOWS PROMISE.
IT'S NOT REALLY A MATTER OF HOW I THINK OF THEM
I always see them
WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THOSE TWO, TAKUMA?

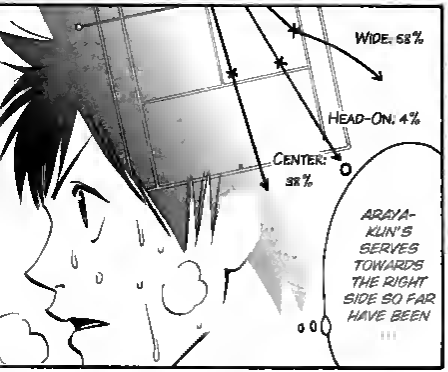
BECAUSE THIS IS A GAME ON WHICH MARUO-KUN HAS TO BET EVERYTHING ON.
WHY DOES THAT SHOW PROMISE IN THIS GAME?
A "RETURN" IS WHEN THEY HIT BACK THE SERVE.


BY ALL MEANS, IN TENNIS, THE SERVING SIDE HOLDS THE ADVANTAGE IN MOVING ON IN THE GAME.
THAT, OF COURSE, MEANS THAT THOSE ON THE RECEIVING SIDE ARE AT A DISADVANTAGE.
BUT EACH PERSON HAS AN OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE.
SO IT'S NOT LIKE THEY HAVE TO REMAIN ON DEFENSE TO WIN.
THE GAME IS ALL ABOUT BREAKING DURING THE OPPONENT'S SERVE AND MAKING SURE THEY DON'T WIN WHEN ON DEFENSE.

AND SO, A SERVE IS A SKILL ONE USES IN ORDER NOT TO LOSE,
WHILE THE RETURN GAME IS A SKILL USED IN ORDER TO WIN.

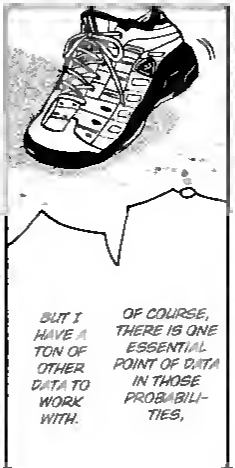
SO, MARUO, WHO'S IN SUCH A BAD POSITION RIGHT NOW,
HAS TO DO SOMETHING DURING HIS RETURNS TO WIN.
#43: THE SKILL TO WIN

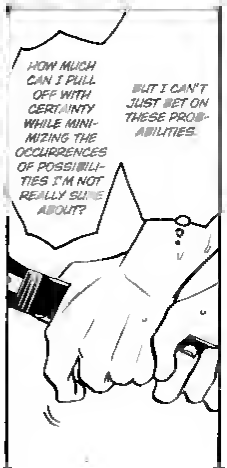
THAT'S SOMETHING EVEN HE SHOULD KNOW.
HE CAN'T MAKE A BREAK THE SAME WAY HE HAS BEEN DOING SO FAR.

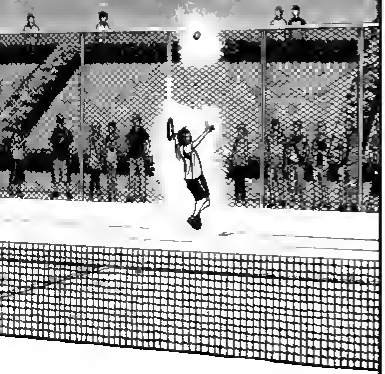

WIDE: 58%
HEAD-ON: 4%
CENTER: 38%
ARAIA-KUN'S SERVES TOWARDS THE RIGHT SIDE SO FAR HAVE BEEN

I WANT TO TAKE CONTROL OF THIS MATCH IN ANY WAY I CAN.

SUCH AS...


BUT I HAVE A TON OF OTHER DATA TO WORK WITH.
OF COURSE, THERE IS ONE ESSENTIAL POINT OF DATA IN THOSE PROBABILITIES,


HOW MUCH CAN I PULL OFF WITH CERTAINTY WHILE MINIMIZING THE OCCURRENCES OF POSSIBILITIES I'M NOT REALLY SURE ABOUT?
BUT I CAN'T JUST BET ON THESE PROBABILITIES.



THE WAY HE TOSSES UP THE BALL!

THE FARTHER AWAY TO THE RIGHT FROM HIS BODY, THE MORE LIKELY HE IS TO SHOOT A WIDE, AND THE CLOSER TO THE LEFT FROM HIS BODY, MORE LIKELY HE IS TO SHOOT DOWN THE CENTER.

HIS LINE OF SIGHT!

THE LAST PLACE HE LOOKED AT IS WHERE THE SHOT IS MOST LIKELY TO GO

HIS STANCE!

THE WIDER HIS FEET ARE PLACED THE MORE LIKELY HE IS TO SHOOT WIDE, AND THE TIGHTER THEY'RE PLACED, THE MORE LIKELY HE IS TO SHOOT DOWN THE CENTER

WHERE HE STANDS!

THE CLOSER HE STANDS TO THE CENTER MARK, THE MORE LIKELY HE IS TO SHOOT DOWN THE CENTER, AND THE FARTHER AWAY FROM THE MARK, THE MORE LIKELY HE IS TO MAKE A WIDE SHOT

THE ANGLE OF HIS RACKET.

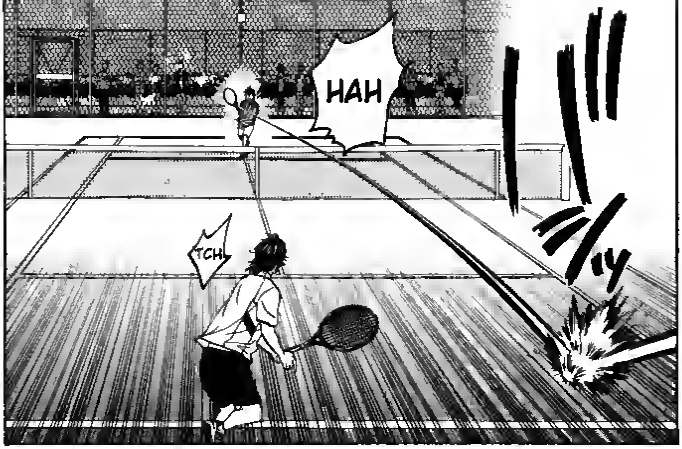
THE RACKET'S ORIENTATION WITH RESPECT TO THE GROUND. THE MORE VERTICAL IT IS, THE MORE LIKELY, HE IS TO MAKE A SLICE, AND THE MORE HORIZONTAL IT IS, THE MORE LIKELY, HE IS TO SHOOT A FLAT

THEY'RE ONLY LITTLE THINGS, BUT I'M GAINING A LOT OF INFORMATION FROM THEM!

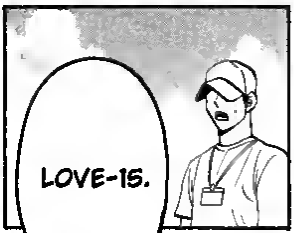
I'VE SEEN THROUGH EVERY PART OF HIM!

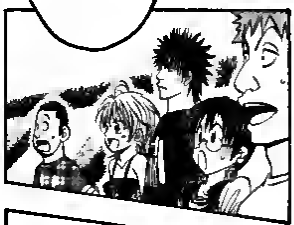
HAH!
HE'S ALREADY MOVING FOR IT?!
HE'S GOING WIDE!
GOT IT!

HAH!
KUH!
NICE RETURN!


HAH
TCH!

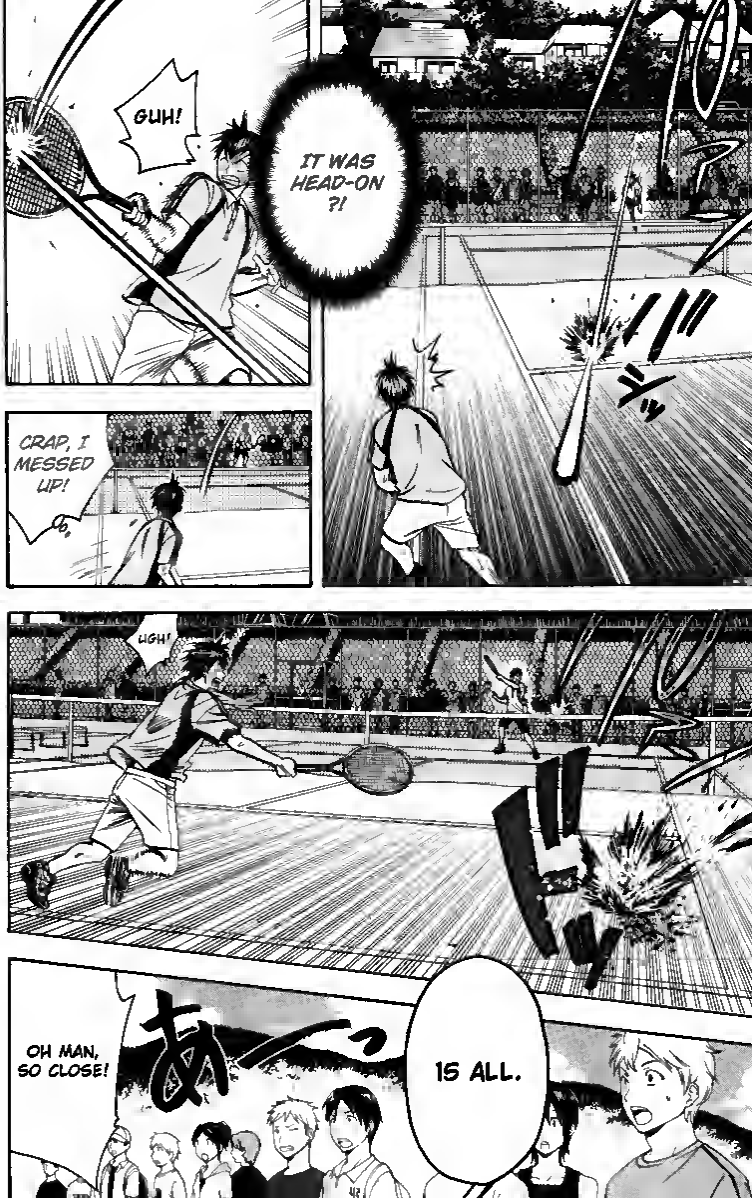
WHOA, WHAT WAS THAT?! AWESOME!
おお
お
HE DASHED FOR THAT ONE!


LOVE-15.



HE'S FIGHTING HARD TO THE EXTREME!
GOT IT!
THAT ISN'T LIKE HIM! HE WAS TOTALLY ON THAT BALL!
I'M SO GLAD I GOT IT, WENT UP COURT AND SCORED WITH IT!
It would've been pretty bad had I stayed at the back of the court
I-I GOT IT... I'M SO GLAD I GOT IT!
BUT THAT'S STILL ONLY ONE BALL.
Here's where the battle begins
HE READ MY SERVE?

AS FAR AS MY NOTES GO, THE PROBABILITY OF HIS SHOTS DOWN THE LEFT COURT
WIDE 0%
HEAD-ON 3%
CENTER 0%
HE DOES A LOT OF WIDE SHOTS, BASICALLY.
BUT I CAN'T JUST GO ACCORDING TO THE DATA!
HE'S STANDING A BIT TO THE RIGHT, SO THAT'S A WIDE SHOT
FROM HIS STANCE, HE'LL EITHER SHOOT HEAD-ON OR WIDE.
HE TOSSED THE BALL UP A LITTLE TO THE RIGHT, SO THAT'S EITHER A HEAD-ON SHOT OR A WIDE,
AND SO THE PROBABILITY OF HIM SHOOTING HEAD-ON OR WIDE IS HIGH.
IT'S GOING WIDE!


GUH!
IT WAS HEAD-ON ?!
CRAP, I MESSED UP!
UGH!
OH MAN, SO CLOSE!
あ～っ
15 ALL.

HE'S GOOD AT READING AND REACTING, BUT HE WON'T BE ABLE TO KEEP GETTING THE COURSES RIGHT.
THE FACT THAT I HAVE THE ADVANTAGE ISN'T GOING TO CHANGE!
THE ONE WITH THE HIGHEST PROBABILITY CAME AT ME AT SUCH A LOW PLACE...
LIKE I THOUGHT, THE PROBABILITIES I'VE HAD UP UNTIL NOW WON'T BE RIGHT.
HAS HE FIGURED OUT THAT I'VE BEEN READING HIS SERVES?
I'LL JUST HAVE TO PAY CLOSER ATTENTION TO THE DATA I CAN SEE WITH MY OWN EYES!
H-HE'S... GOING WIDE!

TCH!
GOT IT!
ドッ
15-30.
I GOT THE POINT! IF I GET IT RIGHT, I CAN MAKE IT! I CAN USE THIS STRATEGY!
HE'S READING THE COURSE OF THE BALL, ISN'T HE?
IF HE REALLY CAN READ THEM RIGHT, HE'S GOT THE ADVANTAGE...
HOW'S HE GETTING IT RIGHT?
OKAY...

THAT FORM... HE'S GOING FOR HIS BEST SHOT, A WIDE!
WHA?!

G-GOOD LUCK, MARUO-KUN..
HE WAS WAY OFF THAT TIME..
30 ALL.
HE ACTED LIKE HE WAS GOING TO HIT WIDE AND WENT DOWN THE CENTER?!
A SLICE GOING WIDE
A FLAT TOWARDS THE CENTER
JUST SHIFTING HIS WRIST AROUND RIGHT BEFORE THE IMPACT CHANGED THE COURSE?!
BUT WHY?! IT WAS EXACTLY THE SAME AS BEFORE..!
BUT IT WENT DOWN THE CENTER..
YOU CAN DO SOMETHING LIKE THAT, TOO?!
HE FOUND OUT I WAS READING HIS FORM AND CAUGHT ME OFF-GUARD

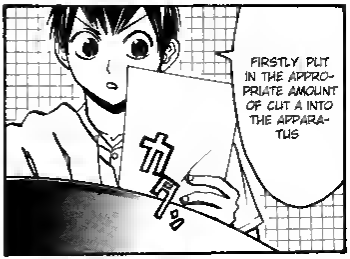
30 ALL ...
HE'S BEEN READING THE HIGHER PROBABILITIES OF MY SERVES.
I GET IT NOW.
IF I GET THIS, I'LL GET THE BREAK POINT.
IF HE GETS IT, IT WILL BE THE MATCH POINT.
IN
CS

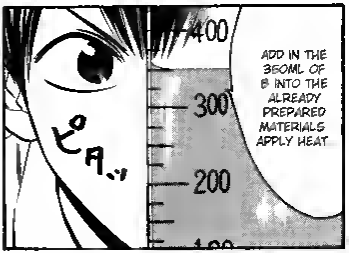
	1	2	3
ARAYA	6	5	
MARUO	1	4	

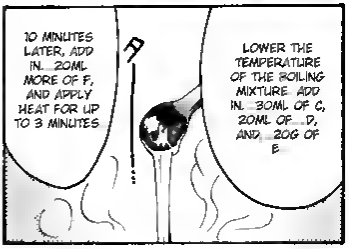
CONTINUED IN VOLUME 6.

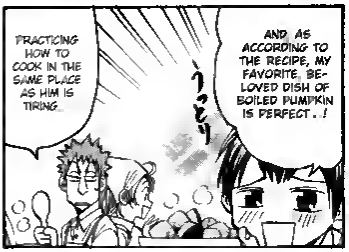
Baby Steps

Baby Steps ⑤ Extra






10 MINUTES LATER, ADD IN 20ML MORE OF F, AND APPLY HEAT FOR UP TO 3 MINUTES
LOWER THE TEMPERATURE OF THE BOILING MIXTURE ADD IN 30ML OF C, 20ML OF D, AND 20G OF E


PRACTICING HOW TO COOK IN THE SAME PLACE AS HIM IS TIRING...
AND AS ACCORDING TO THE RECIPE, MY FAVORITE, BELOVED DISH OF BOILED PUMPKIN IS PERFECT..!

I WAS HELPED WITH MAKING VOLUME 5 OF BABY STEPS
THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR EVERYTHING

HEY THERE. THIS IS KACHIKI.
I WAS GIVEN PERMISSION TO DRAW THE PLANNED
THEME OF THE SPECIAL FOR THIS MAGAZINE ISSUE
"MY FAVORITE DISH"
A PUMPKIN, B BROTH, C OSAKE, D MIRIN, E SUGAR,
AND F SOY SAUCE WERE THE INGREDIENTS.

EI CHAN'S FAVORITE DISH IS BOILED PUMPKIN
(IT DOESN'T MATTER HOW IT'S MADE)

INCIDENTALLY, MY FAVORITE FOOD IS BOILED TOFU
(REALLY DOESN'T MATTER HERE, EITHER)

WELL THEN, I HOPE TO SEE YOU AGAIN IN THE NEXT VOLUME!

WE AT IMANGASCANS ARE IN NEED OF JAPANESE TRANSLATORS FOR MANY OF OUR SERIES, OR ELSE THEY WILL BE ON HOLD!!

OR OTHER SERIES THAT WE MIGHT HAVE AND NOT LISTED HERE

PLEASE VISIT OUR IRC CHANNEL AT #IMANGASCANS IRC.IRCHIGHWAY.NET

PLEASE BE CAREFUL, DO NOT DONATE ON THE PAYPAL ACCOUNT OF "IMANGASCANS" ON ANIMEA.NET, BECAUSE THE MONEY WILL NOT GO TO US, IT'S A FAKE.

OR GO TO IMANGASCANS.ORG AND ASK ON THE FORUMS

CATERPILLAR OPERETTA

WE ALSO ACCEPT CLEANERS AND TYPESETTERS. LAST BUT NOT LEAST, DONATIONS ARE ALWAYS WELCOMED.

WE NEED A CLEANER AND A TYPESETTER FOR THE MANGA HEADS. APPLY IF INTERESTED.

SHINWA PONCHI